



ERIK NASARENKO District Attorney

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Charges Filed in Organized Retail Theft and High-Speed Pursuit

VENTURA, California – District Attorney Erik Nasarenko announced today that Esperanza Venejas (DOB 11/09/96), of Chile, Hugo Perez Martinez (DOB 08/11/95), of Chile, and a 16-year-old Chilean juvenile have been charged in connection with a theft from The Oaks shopping mall in Thousand Oaks. Both adults have been charged with conspiracy, organized retail theft, and receiving stolen property. Additionally, Martinez was charged with evading arrest, hit-and-run, and resisting arrest. The juvenile has been charged with grand theft and giving a false name to Ventura County Sheriff's deputies. All three are suspected members of a South American Theft Group.

On April 15, 2022, at approximately 6:00 p.m., security at The Oaks was notified of four suspects trying to break into a parked vehicle. When security arrived on scene, the four suspects separated and fled the area on foot. Deputies from the Ventura County Sheriff's Office located and arrested the juvenile and Venejas. Meanwhile, Martinez returned to the parked vehicle and fled. In the parking lot near where the vehicle had been parked, a booster bag with approximately \$2,500 in stolen Macy's department store merchandise was found.

Shortly thereafter, deputies spotted Martinez driving the vehicle and attempted a traffic stop. Martinez led deputies on a pursuit that ended in a nearby residential area when Martinez crashed the vehicle. Martinez was quickly apprehended and taken into custody. The fourth suspect remains outstanding.

On April 19, 2022, Venejas and Martinez appeared for arraignment in the Ventura County Superior Court and pled not guilty. The cases are set for an early disposition conference on April 28, 2022, at 1:30 p.m. in courtroom 12. Venejas and Martinez are currently in custody in the Ventura County Jail

with bail set at \$50,000 for Venejas and \$100,000 for Martinez. The juvenile remains detained at the Ventura County Juvenile Facility and will be arraigned on April 21, 2022.

“I am grateful to the Ventura County Sheriff’s Office for apprehending these alleged defendants,” said District Attorney Erik Nasarenko. “We are committed to working with our law enforcement partners to ensure organized theft crews are held accountable.”

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The Ventura County District Attorney’s Office is the public prosecutor for the county’s 850,000 residents. The office employs approximately 290 employees including attorneys, investigators, victim advocates, and professional support staff who strive to seek justice, ensure public safety, and protect the rights of crime victims.