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NEWS RELEASE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MARCH 12, 2020

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**GRAND JURY INDICTS SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT LIEUTENANT, SERGEANT,
AND FORMER DEPUTY ALONG WITH A TOW COMPANY OWNER IN BRIBERY CASE**

RIVERSIDE – A Riverside County criminal grand jury on March 11, 2020, returned indictments charging a Riverside County Sheriff's Department lieutenant, sergeant, and a former deputy along with a tow truck company owner in a criminal conspiracy case.

Sheriff's Lt. Samuel Flores, Sgt. Robert Christolon, former deputy Kevin Carpenter, and the owner of DJ's Towing, Cody Close, have been charged in the indictment. Charges include bribery, conspiracy to commit a crime, and unlawful computer network access. Flores and Christolon are currently on administrative leave and Carpenter is no longer employed by the Sheriff's Department.

All four men are scheduled to be arraigned on March 27, 2020, in Department 61 at the Hall of Justice in Riverside.

In early 2018, Flores and Christolon supervised the traffic division at the Temecula Police Department. Temecula contracts its law enforcement from the Sheriff's Department. Carpenter was assigned to Court Services in Banning but worked overtime with the Temecula police traffic division. DJ's Towing contracted with the Sheriff's Department to provide towing services.

According to evidence and testimony presented to the criminal grand jury, between 2018 and early 2019, Close provided Flores, Christolon, and Carpenter with free or steeply discounted vehicles, free meals, the use of his facility for vehicle repairs, and a free stay for Flores in a beachfront home in exchange for extra business and preferential treatment.

Carpenter and Flores would use DJ's Towing "out of rotation", meaning when another tow company on a "rotation list" should have had the opportunity to respond to a call, DJ's Towing would instead get that call. Carpenter falsely logged tows as traffic citations in the Sheriff's Department's computer network in attempts to avoid detection.

Also, Flores used Close's hazardous waste cleanup business and promoted it to other sheriff's employees despite that business not having a contract with the Sheriff's Department to provide such service.

It is also alleged that, when other members of the traffic division noticed and complained, Flores and Christolon provided cover for Carpenter's activities.

The scheme was discovered when another tow company in the City of Temecula noticed DJ's Towing being used "out of rotation" and complained to the Sheriff's Department.

The case, RIF2010090, is being prosecuted by Deputy District Attorneys David Allen and Emily Hanks of the DA's Public Integrity Unit. The case was investigated by the Sheriff's Department's Riverside Auto theft Interdiction Detail (RAID).

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