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Bail bondsman faces charge

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A Mount Pleasant bail bondsman spent some time behind bars himself last weekend after police said he accepted \$5,570 from a Moncks Corner woman but didn't bond her son out of jail.



Provided

Tyrone Maurice Bennett

Moncks Corner police arrested Tyrone Maurice Bennett, 39, on Saturday and charged him with breach of trust with fraudulent intent. He was released from the Hill-Finklea Detention Center that same day on \$40,000 bail, a jail official said.

Authorities said the case has also been referred to the S.C. attorney general's office and the S.C. Department of Insurance, the latter of which oversees the licensing of bondsmen.

Police said Bennett operates a Charleston company called 1Bennett Bail Bonds. The company name is not to be confused with Bennett Bail Bonds of Moncks Corner.

Nick Bennett, the owner of Bennett Bail bonds, said this case and the similarity in

company names -- the only difference is the numeral 1 -- have caused him trouble.

He said Tyrone Bennett is not affiliated with Bennett Bail Bonds and is not a relative.

According to a Moncks Corner police incident report, a woman and her mother paid Tyrone Bennett \$5,570 in four installments between Jan. 8 and Feb. 11 to get her 19-year-old son out of the Hill-Finklea Detention Center, where he was being held on charges of assault and battery with intent to kill and armed robbery.

The man, who had been in jail since November 2009, was not bonded out.

He was released from jail this week on \$150,000 bail through another bail bondsman, authorities said. And police Lt. Wendell Bowen said the money taken from the two women has yet to be returned.

An investigation was launched and an arrest warrant was signed on March 1.

Police arrested Tyrone Bennett on Saturday at another bail bonding company. One condition of his release is that he must wear a GPS ankle bracelet, authorities said.

Tyrone Bennett, who did not return a phone call or e-mail seeking comment, still has an active bondsman license in South Carolina, according to the Insurance Department website.

Ann Roberson, a spokeswoman for the department, said the agency can't comment on cases under investigation but said, in general, a bondsman will retain his or her license until an investigation is complete and a determination is made.

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