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California Bail Bond Agents Arrested For Kidnapping, Extortion and Insurance Fraud

Three Northern California bail bondsmen have been arrested for allegedly kidnapping clients for the purpose of extortion and insurance fraud.

Insurance Commissioner Dave Jones made the announcement on Thursday that bail agent Aleo J. Pontillo, 40, of Modesto, Calif., owner of AJ's Bail Bonds, and bail agent and office manager Janelle M. Llorens, 27, also from Modesto, were arrested along with another bail bondsmen on Wednesday.

Bail for Pontillo and Llorens is set at \$2 million and \$1 million respectively. A hold has been placed on the defendants requiring each to demonstrate to a judge that no portion of the bail consideration was feloniously obtained.

"The arrests of these unscrupulous licensed bail agents should send a very clear message," Jones said in a statement. "The severity of their alleged crimes will simply not be tolerated."

Investigators allege that from 2006 through 2010 Pontillo, Llorens and bail agent Mark D. Davis, 49, of Modesto, who was also taken into custody, were "in conspiracy to defraud the County of Stanislaus of monies rightfully owed, or soon to be owed, under the bail forfeiture process and committed perjury to further the scheme."

According to investigators the three committed insurance fraud by submitting bonds to falsely represent a fugitive of the court had been apprehended.

The investigation also showed that Pontillo and Llorens conspired to kidnap at least six of AJ Bail Bond clients, all of whom were former arrestees bonded out of jail by the business, for the purpose of extorting a bail bond premium debt, investigators said.

These clients were apprehended and transported to AJ's Bail Bonds, held and threatened with return to jail if they couldn't pay the premium, according to investigators.

Pontillo and Llorens are charged with conspiracy to commit kidnapping for the purpose of extortion, and insurance fraud. Davis' bail was set at \$500,000. He has been charged along with Pontillo and Llorens with conspiracy to commit grand theft and for willfully making an untrue representation to a court to avoid bail bond forfeiture. Llorens and Davis have also been charged with perjury.

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