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Owner of Modesto bail bonds business, 2 others arrested

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MODESTO --]

Stanislaus County sheriff's officials on Wednesday arrested three people, including the owner of a Modesto bail bonds business, on charges of grand theft and criminal conspiracy.

Aleo John Pontillo, 40, owner of AJ's Bail Bonds in the 1300 block of Yosemite Boulevard, was arrested on suspicion of grand theft, criminal conspiracy and insurance fraud, according to the Sheriff's Department's custody list. His bail was set at \$2 million.

Mark David Davis, 49, was arrested on suspicion of conspiracy to commit grand theft and perjury. Janelle Marie Llorens, 27, also was arrested on suspicion of conspiracy to commit grand theft and perjury, and she was charged with insurance fraud.

It's unclear whether Davis or Llorens are employees at the bail bonds business or how they are connected to Pontillo. The business was the focus of a federal investigation in 2008.

Wednesday's arrests were part of an investigation conducted by the state Department of Insurance. Department spokesman Dave Alt-hausen said the department could not release any information Wednesday evening because details were "still coming in from agents in the field."

Althausen said the department is expected to release more information about the arrests and the investigation today.

Pontillo, Davis and Llorens were booked at the Stanislaus County Jail on Wednesday morning. They were taken into custody without incident, said Sgt. Anthony Bejaran, a sheriff's spokesman.

Pontillo, Davis and Llorens were being held at the jail Wednesday evening.

Davis' bail was set at \$500,000, and Llorens' bail was set at \$1 million. The three defendants were scheduled to appear today in Stanislaus County Superior Court for an arraignment hearing, according to the court's Web site.

On Dec. 23, 2008, FBI agents, along with members of a gang task force, served a federal search warrant at AJ's Bail Bonds, just west of La Loma Avenue in Modesto.

At the time, Pontillo told The Bee that federal agents also searched for paperwork at his home on Albers Road, east of Modesto. Some investigators could be seen at the business, examining papers and searching files.

Nobody was taken into custody during the 2008 search. An FBI spokesman at the time said the search warrant was sealed in federal court, and the FBI would not comment on any aspects of the investigation, including whether there was any possible gang activity or associations with the business.

Members of the Central Valley Gang Impact Task Force assisted federal agents in the 2008 search. The task force is a federally funded, countywide group that has members from local law enforcement agencies and the FBI.

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Modesto Police, Stanislaus Sheriff and the FBI raided A.J.'s Bail Bonds on Yosemite Ave. just west of La Loma Ave. Tuesday (12/22/08) morning. (Marty Bicek/The Bee - Modesto Bee - Marty Bicek)

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