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San Francisco Police Make Arrest in Bicycle Theft-Fencing Operation 20-125

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In late August of 2020 investigators from the Mission Station Investigations Team and Northern Station plainclothes officers identified a suspect who they believed was buying and selling stolen bicycles that were taken during the commission of several residential burglaries in San Francisco. The buying and selling of stolen goods are commonly referred to as a “fencing” operation. During the course of the investigation, officers conducted several undercover buying operations that resulted in the recovery of four stolen bicycles that were later returned to the rightful owners. The recovery of the four bicycles gave officers probable cause to obtain a search warrant for a home and storage unit in San Mateo County and for the arrest of the suspect.

On Friday, October 30, 2020, at approximately 7:10 AM, San Francisco Police officers and investigators served a search warrant on the 100 block of Lorton Avenue in Burlingame. Officers detained 48-year-old Israel Hernandez in his home. During a subsequent search of Hernandez’s home and storage, unit officers located 18 stolen bicycles and one stolen motorized scooter.

Hernandez was later taken to the San Mateo County Jail and booked on a warrant for receiving stolen property.

This investigation was the culmination of a joint effort between the Mission Station Investigations Team, Mission Station Housing officers, Northern Station plainclothes officers, the SFPD Burglary Detail, San Jose Police Street Crimes Unit, the San Mateo County Crime Suppression Unit, and the San Mateo County District Attorney’s Office.

San Francisco is experiencing an increase in burglaries, many of which involve the theft of bicycles from residential garages. SFPD’s response to burglary investigations begins with patrol officers who take the initial report, canvass the area for evidence and notify crime scene investigators and Burglary Detail, investigators. Investigators exhaust every lead, which can include witness statements, video footage, and physical evidence in an effort to recover stolen property and identify and arrest the suspects. When an arrest is made, burglary investigators present the best possible case to the district attorney for rebooking. The SFPD Burglary Detail tracks repeat offenders and burglary “crews” in an effort to connect these offenders to other burglaries and help prevent future burglaries.

This investigation is one example of hard work, dedication, and interagency cooperation police officers and investigators commit to every day to make arrests,

recover and return stolen property to the rightful owners and help curb the proliferation of burglaries.

Bicycle owners can help prevent theft by locking up your bicycles, even when inside a secure location, registering your bicycles, and filing a police report if you are the victim of a theft or burglary. For more information on how to secure your home, safeguard your property, and how to register your bicycle visit SF Safe at www.sfsafe.org

While an arrest has been made, this remains an active an ongoing investigation. Anyone with information is asked to call the SFPD 24 Hour Tip Line at [1-415-575-4444](tel:1-415-575-4444) or Text a Tip to [TIP411](tel:TIP411) and begin the text message with SFPD. You may remain anonymous.

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