

TORRANCE

Press Release
Police Department

Subjects Arrested for Selling Stolen Property at Illegal Storefronts DR # 150018311



On 21 May 2015, the Torrance Police Department Detective Division / Crimes Property Section in conjunction with Ralphs / Kroger Organized Retail Crime Unit culminated a month long investigation of stolen property, which mainly included health and beauty supply merchandise. Ralphs / Kroger had an estimated \$250,000 loss from five stores located in the City of Torrance over the last 12 months and an estimated 8.1 million dollar loss county wide during the same time period. These losses do not include other retail stores who have also experienced loss of merchandise due to theft.

Detectives identified two suspects who operated multimillion dollar storefronts that sold this stolen merchandise. Multi-location search warrants were conducted and two suspects, Javier Franco 39 years and Celestino Mendez 30 years, both Los Angeles residents, were taken into custody. Detectives recovered approximately \$295,000 worth of stolen merchandise from the businesses. The stores operated without valid business permits and failed to pay any taxes on the sales of the stolen property.

In order to combat the effects of Proposition 47, specifically related to retail commercial burglaries and shoplifting, the Torrance Police Department has taken a proactive approach with investigating the people and organizations that are receiving and reselling stolen merchandise, as well as those who are actually committing the thefts from the retail businesses.

This incident is being investigated under the command and direction of Captain Rod Irvine of the Special Operations Bureau. Anyone with additional information related to this case is encouraged to contact the Torrance Police Department Detective Division at (310) 618-5570.

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