

BUTTE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE MEDIA RELEASE

**JERRY W. SMITH
SHERIFF-CORONER**



DATE : 08-22-12

RELEASED BY: Sgt. Anthony Borgman

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SUBJECT: C12-14264-Extensive Identity Theft, Suspects in Custody

On July 25, 2012, Butte County Sheriff's Deputy W. Brewton took a report of identity theft from a victim in Magalia. This first victim's credit card was used to purchase electronics and personal items at multiple locations in Oroville. Deputy Brewton identified 27 year old, unemployed, Chico resident ELIZABETH LEE HOLCRAFT, and 20 year old, unemployed, Chico area transient, KRISTOPHER THOMAS CASTRO, as suspects. CASTRO and HOLCRAFT were also identified as suspects in multiple identity theft cases reported to the Paradise Police. Deputy Brewton worked with Paradise Police Detective J. Smith to further develop the case.

CASTRO and HOLCRAFT moved from hotel to hotel, from Reno to Fort Bragg, stealing mail, cashing checks found in the mail, developing credit information on the mail theft victims, and using this ill-gotten information to obtain goods, services and hotel accommodations. They even stole and cashed checks they stole from the mailbox at the fire station in Magalia.

On August 3, 2012, Ft. Bragg, CA police obtained additional evidence of identity theft by CASTRO and HOLCRAFT, when the suspects left property in a hotel room in Ft. Bragg. On August 8, 2012, Deputy Brewton obtained a warrant for CASTRO's arrest. On August 13, 2012, Clearlake, CA Police Officer Lenz arrested CASTRO in a hotel there. On August 14, 2012, Officer Lenz followed up by locating HOLCRAFT at another hotel in Clearlake. He arrested her on an unrelated outstanding drug warrant. At the time of her arrest, she was in possession of computers and personal credit information on numerous additional victims.

CASTRO and HOLCRAFT were transferred to the custody of the Butte County Sheriff's Jail, and both have been booked on multiple new charges of burglary and identity theft, on the Butte County Sheriff's Office and Paradise Police Department cases. Due to the number of victims and the broad geographical area that CASTRO and HOLCRAFT stole mail from, Deputy Brewton met with United States Postal Inspectors on August 21, 2012. The U.S. Postal Inspectors have subsequently assumed the investigation into the additional mail theft victims.

Any citizens who are victims of identity theft by CASTRO and HOLCRAFT, subsequent to CASTRO and HOLCRAFT stealing the victims mail, should call the United States Postal Inspector toll free at 877-876-2455. Everyone should routinely check their credit reports, and contact creditors and their local law enforcement regarding any incidents of identity theft they are the victim of. Additionally, anyone receiving mail in individual curbside mail boxes, should consider purchasing United States Post Office approved locking mailboxes or utilize Post Office Boxes to receive mail, in order to minimize the opportunities for criminals to steal their credit or identifying information.