

Stanislaus County **SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT**

Sheriff Adam Christianson
250 E. Hackett Road, Modesto, CA 95358



MEDIA RELATIONS



**NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**DATE 9-28-10
TIME 10:30 a.m.**

STORECLERK PLOTS ROBBERY WITH UNDERCOVER DETECTIVE

Riverbank, CA - Detectives from Riverbank Police Services and the Sheriff's Departments S.T.I.N.G. (Special Team Investigating Narcotics and Gangs) wrapped up an investigation early Sunday (9-19-10) morning that led to the arrest of a Riverbank convenience store clerk. The clerk, identified as Lester Mangan, 42, of Riverbank, met with undercover investigators over two weeks planning the staged robbery of the Chevron gas station where he was employed. The Chevron is located on the corner of Oakdale Road and Patterson Road, Riverbank.

Detectives initially developed information that Mangan was attempting to recruit partners in a scheme to rob the store of its cash register contents. Mangan tried, unsuccessfully, to lure others into the planned robbery by offering to split the stolen cash.

Riverbank detectives received this information and were eventually able to set up a face-to-face meeting with Mangan. Investigators accomplished this by using an undercover detective who met and spoke with Mangan. Mangan initially planned to rob a gas station in the Petaluma area but thought it would be easier to stage a robbery at the Chevron while he was working.

Throughout the process Mangan detailed how the robbery should look and how they should attempt to make it look real for the surveillance cameras. Mangan even went as far as to ask the detective to point the gun at his face to ensure no one would suspect him as an inside man.

Mangan also spoke to detectives about how he thought this was the best time to stage a crime like this. Mangan knew of the Sheriff's Department's recent fiscal challenges and reassured his accomplices that deputies had recently been laid off and patrol staff was stretched thin. "It's disturbing to hear criminals using the struggling economy against us," said Sheriff Adam Christianson. "It proves that criminals are not going to slow down, or stop, just because we have fewer deputies on the street and fewer dollars in our budget."

Little did Mangan know that he was masterminding his criminal plans with an undercover S.T.I.N.G. detective. Investigators continued to speak to Mangan over the course of two weeks planning the right day and time to go through with the robbery. Once Mangan planned Saturday night, investigators were waiting for a phone call from Mangan, which was the signal carry out the plan. What he did not know was he was sealing the case for his arrest.

"Once he made the phone call to go through with the robbery, we considered that an overt act towards the execution of the crime," said Riverbank detective Josh Humble. "At that point we knew we had him."

Mangan was arrested at the convenience store early Sunday (9-19-10) morning at 0100 hours. Detectives said it was hard not to notice the shock on Mangan's face as he was transported to the Riverbank Police Department for questioning. "Seeing the surprise on his face shows how well our detectives were able to blend in and convince him that they were on his side," said Sergeant Anthony Bejaren who is in charge of the S.T.I.N.G. team.

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Mangan was booked into the Stanislaus County Jail early Sunday on charges of burglary, grand theft and criminal conspiracy. He is currently being held on \$15,000 bail. All of the conversations between Mangan and investigators were recorded and will also be forwarded to the District Attorney's Office to assist in their prosecution.

For information regarding this press release please contact Deputy Andrew Winter (209) 652-0300, awinter@stanislaussheriff.com.

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