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District of Massachusetts**

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**SEVEN ARRESTED FOR STEALING CATALYTIC CONVERTERS FROM OVER 470
VEHICLES AND TARGETING ATMS AND JEWELRY STORES**

*Defendants allegedly responsible for an estimated \$2 million in losses across
Massachusetts and New Hampshire during 2022 and 2023*

BOSTON – Seven members of an organized theft crew were arrested today and charged in federal court in Boston in connection with thefts across the region, including catalytic converters stolen from over 470 vehicles, automatic teller machines and jewelry stores. Over 70 local police departments from across New England contributed to this investigation.

The following defendants have been charged with conspiracy to transport stolen property in interstate commerce; interstate transportation of stolen property; conspiracy to commit bank theft; bank theft; and money laundering conspiracy. They will make an initial appearance in federal court in Boston at 1:30 p.m. today:

1. Rafael Davila, a/k/a “Robin Hood,” 35, of Feeding Hills, Mass.;
2. Jose Torres, a/k/a “Goldy,” a/k/a “Goldy Tech,” 37, of Springfield, Mass.;
3. Nicolas Davila, 25, of Springfield, Mass.;
4. Jose Fonseca, a/k/a “Charlito,” 26, of Springfield, Mass.;
5. Zachary Marshall, 26, of Holyoke, Mass.;
6. Santo Feliberty, 34, of Springfield, Mass.; and
7. Alexander Oyola, a/k/a “Dirty,” 37, of Springfield, Mass.

Catalytic converters are a component of a vehicle’s exhaust device that reduce the toxic gas and pollutants from a vehicle’s internal combustion engine into safe emissions, and are required on all combustion engine automobiles in the United States. Catalytic converters use precious metals in their center or ‘core’ and are targeted for theft due to the high value of these metals – including palladium, platinum and rhodium. Some of these precious metals are more valuable per ounce than gold and their value has been increasing in recent years, with black-market prices being more than \$1,000 each.

Catalytic converters thieves conduct searches in residential neighborhoods, parking lots and other locations to steal the most high-value catalytic converters. Located in a vehicle’s undercarriage, the theft of a vehicle’s catalytic converter results in damage that renders the vehicle inoperable – both mechanically and legally under EPA regulations – until properly replaced.

According to the charging documents, law enforcement throughout Massachusetts and New Hampshire identified a large number of catalytic converter thefts for which a maroon Acura was identified as having been involved. These incidents involved at least two suspects wearing dark clothing, who would target residential and commercial vehicles. The suspects were skilled and able to locate and cut away the catalytic converter from a vehicle within a minute in most instances. The suspects utilized battery operated power-tools, specifically a fast-cutting reciprocating saw. Some vehicles needed to be jacked up in order to access the catalytic converters and the suspects would promptly place the jack under the vehicle, raise it, cut the catalytic converter, stow it in the rear of the maroon Acura and move on.

The investigation revealed that the maroon Acura belonged to Rafael Davila, the alleged theft crew leader who planned and participated in each of the thefts. It is alleged that Rafael Davila engages in catalytic converter thefts and burglaries on a full-time basis, committing thefts multiple nights per week for upwards of eight hours a night. Additionally, cell phone data allegedly revealed that Rafael Davila maintained meticulous notes accounting for the locations that he and his co-conspirators had targeted and the number of catalytic converters that had been stolen, including the makes and models and when they were dropped off.

It is alleged that Rafael Davila would undertake the thefts with a group of individuals, including his brother Nicolas Davila, Fonseca, Feliberty and Marshall. Rafael Davila was allegedly responsible for the planning of and transportation to each targeted theft – using his vehicle, determining price values for stolen converters and purchasing needed materials. Specifically, Rafael Davila allegedly regularly purchased large quantities of bi-metal saw blades designed to be used with a reciprocating power saw as well as cut resistant gloves which, according to surveillance footage, appear identical to those worn by the thieves.

Surveillance footage, communications and location monitoring data obtained from the defendants' cell phones and Davila's vehicle, identified that the defendants were allegedly involved in the theft of catalytic converters from at least 471 vehicles across Massachusetts and New Hampshire in 2022 and 2023 alone. It is believed that a significant number of additional thefts have not been identified or were not ever reported to law enforcement, however. It is alleged that, on numerous occasions, the defendants targeted more than 10 vehicles in a single night, with one night reporting thefts from 26 vehicles.

Once in possession of the stolen catalytic converters, the crew would then allegedly sell them to Torres, who would accumulate stolen catalytic converters from multiple theft crews and then in turn sell them to scrap dealers in the Northeast. In particular, Torres allegedly sold stolen catalytic converters to scrap dealers who have since been charged federally for interstate transportation of stolen property and money laundering, including Alexander Kolitsas and Downpipe Depot charged in the District of Connecticut, as well as DG Auto, a New Jersey based company charged in the Eastern District of California and Northern District of Oklahoma. Torres is alleged to have transacted approximately \$30,000 to \$80,000 in stolen catalytic converters per week to these entities.

Through use of digital pricing applications, and communication with the core buyers, Torres allegedly provided prices to Davila and other theft crews based on the make and model of the vehicle and by the code on the catalytic converter. Knowing the prices of the most valuable converters, Davila and his crew would seek out those makes and models to target. Torres then negotiated with the core buyer and delivered the catalytic converters to their facility. It is alleged that Torres is known to have sold and transported thousands of stolen catalytic converters to scrap dealers in the Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York and New Jersey areas.

In addition to the prolific number of catalytic converter thefts, it is alleged that Rafael Davila, Feliberty and Oyola also conspired to steal from ATMs of federally insured banks in Massachusetts on three separate occasions in December 2022. It is alleged that this conspiracy involved the use of stolen trucks that they would use to rip the ATMs from the ground and gain access to the vault. Davila, Feliberty and Oyola also are alleged to have committed burglaries of two New Hampshire jewelry stores on Jan. 12, 2023. The combined total value of the jewelry stolen during the burglaries was determined to be over \$137,000, with each store facing approximately \$10,000 in costs to repair the resulting damage.

The charge of conspiracy to transport stolen property in interstate commerce provides for a sentence of up to five years in prison, up to three years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000. The charge of interstate transportation of stolen property provides for a sentence of up to 10 years, up to three years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000. The charge of conspiracy to commit bank theft provides for a sentence of up to five years in prison, up to three years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000. The charge of bank theft provides for a sentence of up to 10 years, up to three years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000. The charge of conspiracy to commit money laundering provides for a sentence of up to 20 years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$500,000 or twice the value of the proceeds, whichever is greater. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and statutes which govern the determination of a sentence in a criminal case.

Seventy local police departments in Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Connecticut contributed to this investigation through the submission of their investigations of catalytic converter thefts in their jurisdiction. The Massachusetts Police Departments contributing to the investigation were Abington, Acton, Andover, Auburn, Bedford, Bellingham, Beverly, Billerica, Burlington, Bridgewater, Canton, Carver, Chelmsford, Concord, Cranston, East Hampton, Easton, Fitchburg, Framingham, Franklin, Hampton, Hanover, Haverhill, Hingham, Holliston, Holyoke, Hudson, Ipswich, Lawrence, Leominster, Lynn, Malden, Medford, Marlborough, Methuen, Middleton, Milford, Millbury, Newton, Northborough, Norwell, Norwood, Peabody, Pembroke, Plymouth, Randolph, Rockland, Sharon, Shrewsbury, Springfield, Sterling, Sturbridge, Sudbury, Tyngsborough, Walpole, Waltham, Watertown, West Bridgewater, Weymouth, Wilmington, Woburn and Worcester. The New Hampshire Police Departments contributing to the investigation were Bow, Concord, Derry, Hooksett, Hudson, Londonderry, Manchester, Salem and Windham. The Connecticut Police Departments contributing to the investigation were South Windsor and Windsor.

United States Attorney Rachael S. Rollins; Joseph R. Bonavolonta, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Division; and John E. Mawn, Interim Colonel of the Massachusetts State Police; and Kevin Gallagher, Director of Operations for the National Insurance Crime Bureau, Northeast Region made the announcement today. Valuable assistance was also provided by the United States Attorney's Offices for the District of Connecticut, the Northern District of Oklahoma and the Eastern District of California; Homeland Security Investigations; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives; and the Plymouth County District Attorney's Office. Assistant U.S. Attorney Philip A. Mallard of Rollins' Organized Crime & Gang Unit is prosecuting the case.

The details contained in the charging documents are allegations. The defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

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APPENDIX

Date	Location	Number of Vehicles Stolen From
3/7/2022	Sturbridge, Mass.	6
3/8/2022	Milford, Mass.	8
3/10/2022	Norwell, Mass.	5
3/25/2022	Wilmington, Mass.	6
3/27/2022	Millbury, Mass.	22
5/5/2022	Leominster, Mass.	10
5/10/2022	Holliston, Mass.	10
5/12/2022	Norwood, Mass.	11
5/12/2022	Walpole, Mass.	3
5/12/2022	Sharon, Mass.	7
5/17/2022	Randolph, Mass.	12
5/19/2022	Watertown, Mass.	1
5/19/2022	Medford, Mass.	14
5/19/2022	Malden, Mass.	6
7/21/2022	Lynn, Mass.	3
7/21/2022	Wilmington, Mass.	12
7/26/2022	Easton, Mass.	6
7/28/2022	Norwood, Mass.	2
7/28/2022	Woburn, Mass.	3
8/4/2022	Beverly, Mass.	2
8/16/2022	Woburn, Mass.	26
8/18/2022	Carver, Mass.	2
8/18/2022	Plymouth, Mass.	6
8/23/2022	Canton, Mass.	3
8/25/2022	Middleton, Mass.	1

8/30/2022	Peabody, Mass.	3
8/30/2022	Waltham, Mass.	10
9/1/2022	Hingham, Mass.	3
9/1/2022	Norwell, Mass.	1
9/6/2022	Easton, Mass.	1
9/8/2022	Chelmsford, Mass.	1
9/13/2022	Hanover, Mass.	1
9/13/2022	Hingham, Mass.	2
9/13/2022	Pembroke, Mass.	12
9/15/2022	Bellingham, Mass.	2
9/15/2022	Franklin, Mass.	5
9/15/2022	Hudson, Mass.	6
9/20/2022	Sudbury, Mass.	1
9/21/2022	Wilmington, Mass.	5
9/22/2022	Woburn, Mass.	5
10/2/2022	Ipswich, Mass.	10
10/2/2022	Methuen, Mass.	8
10/2/2022	Billerica, Mass.	10
10/4/2022	Londonderry, NH	13
11/24/2022	Hooksett, NH	14
11/27/2022	Wilmington, Mass.	10
11/27/2022	Millbury, Mass.	3
12/6/2022	Bow, NH	1
12/6/2022	Concord, NH	14
12/21/2022	Manchester, NH	1
12/29/2022	Easthampton, Mass.	2
12/29/2022	Holyoke, Mass.	1
1/5/2023	Framingham, Mass.	9
1/9/2023	Worcester, Mass.	13
1/19/2023	Fitchburg, Mass.	8
1/19/2023	Leominster, Mass.	1
1/26/2023	Abington, Mass.	10
1/26/2023	Weymouth, Mass.	2
1/30/2023	Shrewsbury, Mass.	16
2/9/2023	Wilmington, Mass.	1
2/9/2023	Woburn, Mass.	13
2/16/2023	Marlborough, Mass.	1
2/16/2023	Northborough, Mass.	4
2/28/2023	Auburn, Mass.	2
2/28/2023	Millbury, Mass.	7
3/7/2023	Wilmington, Mass.	3
3/7/2023	Woburn, Mass.	2
3/7/2023	Hudson, Mass.	

