



# NEWS RELEASE

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## SANTA CRUZ COUNTY Sheriff-Coroner

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**Jim Hart**  
Sheriff-Coroner

## Fraud and Weapons Arrest

Case: 17-02954

Date of Incident: January 2012 to April 2017

Location: 3000 block of Portola Dr., Santa Cruz

Person Arrested: Grant Peuse, 42 years old, Scotts Valley, CA resident

Charges: 487(a) PC – 5 Counts (Grand theft), 368(d) PC (Theft from an elder), 186.10(a) (Money laundering), 470(a) PC (Forgery), 32625(a) PC (Possession of a machinegun)



In April, the Sheriff's Office in coordination with the District Attorney's Office, Adult Protective Services, and the Bureau of Automotive Repair, initiated an investigation into Grant Peuse. Peuse claimed to build or purchase cars for his clients. What we would later find was a pattern of fraud totaling losses of over \$800,000 to numerous victims.

This investigation began when we learned of a series of large cash investments and loans made by an elderly client of Peuse into Peuse's auto restoration business (GMP Speed & Machine). During the investigation it became apparent that the elderly victim had been defrauded. Not only had much of the victim's money not been directed towards the stated investment, but the victim's credit card had also been used by Peuse to charge tens of thousands of dollars without the victim's permission.

A similar pattern of fraud was found involving other people who had done business with Peuse. In several cases, Peuse told the victims that their invested money would be

used to buy or build specific vehicles and buyers for these vehicles had already been located. We found that in some cases the vehicles to be built or bought never existed. The victim's money was used instead by Peuse for other personal debts.

In at least one instance, Peuse provided forged documents to an investor to attempt to prove that the investment was successful. Peuse then used this as a means of soliciting additional money.

The total combined loss for the identified victims is in excess of \$800,000.

Peuse was arrested on Thursday, July 20<sup>th</sup> and booked at the Santa Cruz Main Jail. The Santa Cruz District Attorney's Office has charged Peuse with five counts of grand theft, theft from an elder, money laundering, forgery and possession of automatic machine guns.

Investigators believe there may be additional victims who have yet to be discovered. If you believe you may be a victim or have additional information related to this case, please contact Detective Roger Galvin at 831-454-7642.

Authored by: Sergeant Chris Clark / July 20, 2017

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