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MEDIA RELEASE / COMMUNITY ALERT

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Traffic Stop Leads to Drugs and Gun Arrest

A traffic stop for a cellphone violation turned into an arrest for drug sales and gun possession.

San Mateo, CA – On February 27, 2026, at approximately 9:55pm, an SMPD officer conducted a traffic stop on a vehicle in the area of E. 25th Ave and S. El Camino Real for a witnessed cell phone violation. During the contact, the stop moved to that of a DUI investigation. A consent search was done of the driver and a large amount of cash and suspected cocaine were located on his person. A search of the vehicle revealed 12 more baggies of suspected cocaine, 1 baggie of suspected ketamine, a loaded semi-automatic pistol in the trunk, along with 31 rounds of ammunition.

The driver, identified as Bao Thai Pham, was placed under arrest for the numerous drug charges listed below, as well as the gun charges. His vehicle was towed, and the District Attorney's Office authorized the asset seizure protocol for the cash, which is believed to be profit from drug sales. Pham was transported and booked into the San Mateo County Jail.

This was an example of a good, proactive stop made by one of our officers. Even a basic traffic stop can make a huge impact when it comes to fighting crime and getting drugs off our streets. At the very least, it is a reminder to stay off your cell phone while driving and never drive with drugs and guns in your car. It is a terrible combination. One that can get you in trouble every time.

If you or someone you know needs help for drug and/or alcohol addiction, help is out there. San Mateo County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services can assist you. Visit smchealth.org/bhrs or call (650)802-6400.

ARRESTED
Bao Thai Pham, 26-year-old San Leandro resident

CHARGES:
11352(a)HS-Transport/sell a controlled substance, 11351HS-Possess/purchase a controlled substance, 11379(a)HS-Transport a controlled substance, 11370.1(a)HS-Possess a controlled substance with armed with a loaded weapon, 11378HS-Possess controlled substance for sale, 25400(a)(1)PC-Carry a concealed weapon in a vehicle, and 29800(a)(1)PC-Felon/Addict possess a firearm.

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