SAN MATEO POLICE DEPARTMENT
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MEDIA RELEASE / COMMUNITY ALERT

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Traffic Stop Leads to Multiple Arrests and the Seizure of Over 30 Grams of Suspected Fentanyl

What began as a registration-related enforcement stop resulted in the seizure of suspected fentanyl and the arrest of multiple individuals.

San Mateo, CA – On June 11, 2026, at approximately 12:13 a.m., a San Mateo Police Department officer conducted a traffic stop on a vehicle in the area of S. Grant Street and E. 4th Avenue for a registration violation. During the stop, the officer contacted multiple occupants of the vehicle and observed signs indicating they may have been under the influence of a controlled substance. The driver, Abraham Madrigal, and passengers Vanessa Vasquez and John Whittington were evaluated to determine whether they were under the influence of a controlled substance. A probable cause search of the vehicle was subsequently conducted with the assistance of a narcotics detection canine.

During the search, officers located more than 30 grams of suspected fentanyl inside the vehicle. Vasquez was arrested for possession of a controlled substance and was later charged with attempting to smuggle a controlled substance into a correctional facility. Whittington was arrested on felony and misdemeanor warrants, as well as for possession of a controlled substance and possession of unlawful paraphernalia. Madrigal was issued a citation for being under the influence of a controlled substance and for possession of unlawful paraphernalia.

Vasquez and Whittington were booked into the San Mateo County Jail on their respective charges and warrants. Charges related to the fentanyl seizure were forwarded to the San Mateo County District Attorney's Office for prosecution.

If you or someone you know needs help with drug or alcohol addiction, assistance is available. San Mateo County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services can help. Visit smchealth.org/bhrs or call (650) 802-6400. Fentanyl is an extremely potent synthetic opioid, and even a very small amount can be deadly. According to federal health authorities, as little as two milligrams, an amount that can fit on the tip of a pencil, may constitute a lethal dose depending on a person's size, tolerance, and other factors.

ARRESTED
Abraham Madrigal, 38-year-old Santa Maria resident
Vanessa Vasquez, 40-year-old Eastvale resident
John Whittington, 42-year-old Grover Beach resident

CHARGES:
Madrigal-11364 (A) HS-Possession of Unlawful Paraphernalia, 11550 (A) HS-Under the Influence of a Controlled Substance

Vasquez-4573(A)-Smuggle a Controlled Substance into a Correctional Facility, 11395(B)(1)-Possession of a Controlled Substance with Two or More Priors

Whittington-11395(B)(1)-Possession of a Controlled Substance with Two or More Priors, 11364 (A) HS-Possession of Unlawful Paraphernalia

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