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AG Sunday, Pa. State Police Announce Charges in ‘Operation Dirty Paper’ — Central Pa.-Based ‘Chop Shop’ and Fraud Criminal Enterprise

Fifteen individuals and two business entities are charged with corrupt organizations, related offenses

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HARRISBURG — Attorney General Dave Sunday and the Pennsylvania State Police announced charges against numerous individuals regarding a central Pennsylvania-based “chop shop” operation that also involved vehicle title washing, fraudulent vehicle inspections, and identity theft.

The Office of Attorney General and state police investigation also involved presentments from the [52nd Statewide Investigating Grand Jury](#) regarding two collaborating criminal enterprises:

- [Angel Vidal](#) and his “chop shop” location in Lebanon
- El Fuerte Auto Sales and El Fuerte Tire & Auto (both in Lebanon), which were run by defendants [Yonathan Peguero-Rodriguez](#) and [Johandeiry Bonilla](#).

In all, 15 individuals and the two El Fuerte business entities were charged in recent days with numerous offenses, including, but not limited to, corrupt organizations, insurance fraud, bank fraud, identity theft, and forgery.

Investigators allege the criminal organizations profited well over half a million dollars and that many Pennsylvanians were impacted, either by having their identities stolen, unknowingly buying vehicles from the “chop shop,” or encountering on roadways vehicles that were not properly inspected.

"This complex scheme involved many different types of criminal behavior that directly victimized Pennsylvanians, or put drivers and passengers at risk by being in the path of vehicles that may have been unsafe," Attorney General Sunday said. "I commend the investigators from our Insurance Fraud and Organized Crime sections, as well as the Pennsylvania State Police, for unraveling these convoluted criminal enterprises and bringing charges that bring them to a halt."

"This operation undermined the public's trust in a system that's meant to keep our roads safe, as well as our faith in honest automotive businesses," said Captain James Reinhard, director of the Special Investigations Division in the Pennsylvania State Police Bureau of Criminal Investigation. "The impact of these crimes is real, but so is our commitment to stopping them. We're proud to work with the Office of Attorney General and other law enforcement partners to investigate these operations, shut them down, and hold offenders accountable."

At the center of the Vidal criminal enterprise was a "chop shop" location, at Vidal's home in Lebanon city, that profited by stealing rented vehicles, dismantling and restickering those vehicles, which were then sold below market values in many parts of Pennsylvania and other states.

Most of the vehicles were rented out of state, by individuals using false identification, so by the time the rental companies realized the theft, they were chasing false leads.

Vidal is incarcerated at Northampton County Prison for similar alleged conduct in that county.

The El Fuerte organization aided in the grand scheme by:

- Conducting improper vehicle inspections (commonly call "lick em and stick em" inspections)
- falsifying inspection records
- misrepresentation of vehicle purchase prices
- renting of dealer plates

The cases will be prosecuted by the Senior Deputy Attorney General Erik Olsen and Deputy Attorney General Jose Perez of the Office of Attorney General's Insurance Fraud Sections.

Criminal charges, and any discussion thereof, are merely allegations and all defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.

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