



# HAWTHORNE POLICE DEPARTMENT

12501 South Hawthorne Boulevard, Hawthorne, California, 90250

## PRESS RELEASE

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Suitable For Public Dissemination

### ***“Post-Release Community Supervision” Offenders Identified as Suspects in Robbery Series***

On February 22, 2012, three male suspects entered ‘Millennium Shoes’ in the City of Hawthorne and robbed the business at gunpoint. Cash was taken during the robbery, and the suspects fled to a waiting get-a-way car.

Hawthorne Police Officers located the suspects and, after a brief vehicle pursuit, searched neighborhoods they fled into. One of the male suspects and the female “get-a-way” driver were taken into custody. The two other suspects eluded capture on the day of the robbery. Hawthorne Detectives cultivated information within hours of the robbery, leading to the identification and arrest of the two outstanding suspects.

Through the following weeks of collaboration with other law enforcing agencies, it was discovered that these same suspects were also responsible for several robberies in neighboring cities. Moreover, it was also learned that two of these suspects, 23-year-old **John William Kirkpatrick** and 23-year-old **James R. Baker**, were out of custody pursuant to California’s ‘Post-Release Community Supervision’ program, also known as Realignment. Recently legislated Assembly Bill 109 shifted “low-level, nonviolent offenders” from the state prison and parole system to county jails and probation departments as a way to deal with crowded state prisons. Kirkpatrick and Baker are now part of a forty-six (46)-count felony complaint filed at the Airport Courthouse, which includes a crime spree that spanned from November 2011 to February 2012. Kirkpatrick and Baker are both being held in the Los Angeles County Jail with bails in excess of \$9,000,000.

Hawthorne Police Chief Robert Fager states: “The arrests of these P.R.C.S. individuals is symbolic of the first ripples to an oncoming tidal wave. Hawthorne, as well as our entire Los Angeles County region, is contending with a legislated mandate causing the continual premature release of convicted offenders. The State has now made it our individual community’s problem to absorb, with no equitable support via funding or staffing. Thus, our Police Department is now forced to redesignate staff and proactive measures, originally enacted for crime prevention, to now address the growing droves of offender releases and their supervision in our society.”

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