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NEWS RELEASE

Four Arrested in Counterfeit Bill Operation

(Grand Junction, CO) – Three California men and a Colorado woman were arrested last night on counterfeiting charges after Grand Junction Police found evidence that fraudulent \$100 bills were being produced by the group in their hotel room.

The arrestees were: Nathan A. Bothwell, age 29 of Oceanside, California; Robert P. Blake, age 29 of Carlsbad, California; Aaron M. Mendez, age 23 of Vista, California; and Katy L. Christian, age 21 of Rangely, Colorado.

The group is accused of “washing” lower denomination bills to create \$100 bills. At least one local business, Herberger’s Department Store at Mesa Mall, received at least one of the fake \$100 bills. Grand Junction Police are conducting an investigation to determine other possible victims. Preliminary investigative work indicates that the arrestees may have passed the counterfeit bills in multiple western states. The Secret Service has been contacted and is actively participating in the investigation.

Police were alerted to the counterfeiting scheme shortly after 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, May 15th, by the manager of the Two Rivers Inn at 141 North 1st Street, where the arrestees had rented a room the day before. Believing that the group had checked out of the hotel, the manager entered the room and discovered what he believed was evidence of a counterfeit bill production.

While officers investigated the room and its contents, the occupants returned and were identified by the hotel manager. All four were placed under arrest for Possession of Marijuana, Possession of Drug Paraphernalia, Theft (between \$500 - \$15,000), 1st Degree Forgery, and Possession of a Forgery Device. Bothwell also was charged with Criminal Impersonation after giving officers a false name. Christian also was charged with Driving with An Expired License.

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