



LOS ANGELES COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE MEDIA RELATIONS DIVISION

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Six charged with Santa Monica art theft

LOS ANGELES – Six people are awaiting arraignment this afternoon in connection with the \$3.2 million theft of paintings, wine, jewelry and a car from financier Jeffrey Gundlach in September, the District Attorney's Office announced.

Darren Agee Merager, 43, allegedly broke into Gundlach's Santa Monica home between Sept. 12 and Sept. 13, 2012, and stole valuable art work, jewelry and wine, said Deputy District Attorney Alva Lin with the Airport Branch office. Merager then allegedly returned hours later and stole Gundlach's Porsche at the behest of Jay Jeffrey Nieto, 45.

Nieto allegedly helped conceal the stolen art and other items at his Pasadena store. Pasadena police, who received a tip, and the Santa Monica Police Department investigated the case.

Charged as co-conspirators are Merager's 68-year-old mother, Brenda Joyce Merager, and two brothers, 29-year-old Wanis George Wahba and his 26-year-old brother, Ely George Wahba. The three allegedly tried to sell and conceal the stolen items. In addition, Wilmer Bolosan Cadiz, 40, is charged with conspiracy and receiving stolen items.

The six, who are charged in case SA082879 with multiple counts, including first-degree residential burglary, conspiracy and receiving stolen property, are scheduled to be arraigned at the Los Angeles Superior Court, Airport Branch, in Department 144.

Prosecutors will ask that bail be set at \$10 million for each defendant.

Merager, who has multiple prior convictions, is facing more than nine years in state prison if convicted.

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