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Warrants issued for used car dealership owners in relation to racketeering case

By Laura Misjak | The Flint Journal

February 19, 2010, 7:15PM



Submitted Photo

Edward Usewick III

Genesee County, Michigan — Arrest warrants were issued this morning for the four used car dealership owners **who allegedly conducted a vehicle racketeering scheme**, officials say.

Edward Usewick III, 30, of Davison; William Dempsy, 58, of Goodrich; James Lane III, 46, of Ortonville and Walter Szunko, 54, of Traverse City each face a count of racketeering and three counts of larceny by conversion in an amount of \$20,000 or more, said Genesee County Prosecutor David Leyton.

Usewick also has been charged with four counts of intent to pass a false title, he said. He could not be reached for comment.

As of Friday morning, he was not in custody and believed to be in Florida, Genesee County Sheriff Robert Pickell said.

Usewick, the owner of Auto Brokers LLC, also called Executive Auto Dealership, 4057 S. Dort Highway in Burton, acquired at least 20 vehicles from a leasing company in Andover, Mass. then sold them through a Flint car auction company using duplicate titles.

The leasing company that gave the vehicles to Usewick never got paid for the cars after they were sold, officials said.

Pickell said Flint Auto Auction and the Massachusetts leasing company were innocent victims in the alleged scam.

Those who purchased the vehicles will be left without the vehicles, which they never owned in the first place, Leyton said, and without the money they paid, he said.

"It's similar to someone who buys a bad title to a house," Leyton said. "They end up with nothing."

Flint Auto Auction officials declined to comment.

Dempsy, Lane and Szunko are all believed to have helped hide the vehicles on their used car lots, Leyton said.

Dempsy operates Great Lakes Auto and Leasing, located on the same lot as Usewick's dealership. Lane runs Lane Car Company, 2200 Ortonville Road in Ortonville, and Szunko runs Executive Auto Brokers, 2421 Branch Road in Flint, and another location in Traverse City, officials said.

Mark Latchana, Lane's attorney, said he believes the allegations against Lane will be proven false.

"He's a businessman and he's always been honest and forthright with his business dealings," Latchana said.

Lane will turn himself in early next week, Latchana said. He did not have information regarding the other defendants.

Dempsy and Szunko could not be reached for comment.

Pickell said at least 24 vehicles worth more than \$310,000 have been recovered but about 40 more vehicles are believed to have been stolen and at least two other financial institutions lost money.

The Genesee Auto Theft Investigation Network continues to investigate.

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