

Man who escaped from Santa Rita Jail back in custody, on immigration hold

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Body

DUBLIN -- A day after escaping from Santa Rita Jail and spending about seven hours on the lam, suspected burglar Jose Luis Gonzales Franco is back in custody. And now federal immigration officials are looking at his case, too.

The 57-year-old, who had been arrested in Oakland on Dec. 28 on burglary charges, is now in custody without bail on a federal immigration hold, according to jail records. Officials still are not sure how he escaped Monday.

Specifics of the immigration hold were not available Tuesday, but it means federal authorities believe Franco is "deportable," said Virginia Kice, a spokeswoman for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Kice said she could not comment specifically on Franco's case, including the reason for the hold and why it came into effect the day after his escape attempt, even though he had been in jail since December.

Additional charges relating to his escape have not yet been presented to the Alameda County District Attorney's Office, said Sheriff's spokesman J.D. Nelson.

He could be charged with escaping from custody and theft, for the bicycle he was found riding when he was captured Monday evening in Dublin, not far from the jail, Nelson said.

The Sheriff's Office is still investigating how Franco escaped over a wall as he arrived back at the jail after a morning court hearing, Nelson said.

A jail employee saw the inmate running away from the jail about 2 p.m., sparking a hunt by officers on foot, including some with dogs, and by helicopter.

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