

## Letter carrier faked dog bite claim for profit, investigators say

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SANTA CRUZ - A letter carrier was arrested Friday in Freedom, a town near Watsonville, following a month-long investigation by the U.S. Postal Service Office of the Inspector General into allegations that she tried to extort hundreds of dollars from one of her customers.

Letter carrier Carolyn Maielua, 49, allegedly told the customer she'd been bitten by the customer's dog earlier this summer, but that she wouldn't report the attack if the customer paid her \$700, according to Dan Mihalko, spokesman for the Inspector General's office. The customer paid about \$100, but when she didn't come up with the rest of the money, Maielua withheld her mail and the customer reported the problem to the Freedom Post Office, Mihalko said.

Maielua was arrested Friday by postal service investigators and the Sheriff's Office, booked into County Jail on suspicion of extortion and later released on \$10,000 bail.

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