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SFPD Warns Public of Jewelry Robbery Scheme After Recent Arrests #26-048

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The San Francisco Police Department is warning the public to be aware of recent jewelry robbery schemes targeting senior citizens around the city and the Bay Area following the recent arrest of two suspects.

The perpetrators often operate as part of a larger criminal enterprise targeting victims wearing visible jewelry, while using deceptive tactics to steal a victim's valuables.

The suspects, who often travel around the region and sometimes from overseas, approach unsuspecting victims and engage them in conversation. The suspects will sometimes offer the victim a necklace or other item. The suspects then remove a victim's valuables as they place the fake gift on the unsuspecting individual.

Unfortunately, many of the victims in these cases are senior citizens.

The SFPD is urging residents and visitors to be vigilant of this activity. If a stranger approaches you and attempts to make physical contact or offer a gift, step away and alert them that you are calling the police.

Anyone who suspects they have been targeted should immediately contact the police. All victims are urged to contact the SFPD as quickly as possible if they become a victim. The SFPD will diligently investigate these cases.

The SFPD urges people to have discussions with their family members – particularly seniors – about these incidents so they can recognize the signs and protect themselves.

A recent incident occurred on March 20 when members assigned to the SFPD's Citywide Plainclothes team were conducting a robbery abatement operation within the city.

Officers were aware of a crime pattern occurring throughout the Bay Area where a suspect, on foot or in a vehicle, approaches a victim and engages in a conversation, and removes their valuables.

A plainclothes officer observed the occupants of a white BMW SUV approaching multiple individuals wearing jewelry, attempting to engage in conversation. Officers believed the occupants were casing for potential victims.

Officers conducted surveillance of the vehicle when they observed the vehicle approach a victim near the corner of 17th Avenue and Cabrillo Street. The suspects engaged the victim in conversation, and during the interaction, the suspect passenger appeared to place a necklace on the victim and then forcibly steal the victim's jewelry.

The suspect vehicle then fled the scene.

Officers maintained surveillance of the vehicle while additional units contacted the victim.

With the assistance of Drone First Responders (DFR), plainclothes officers continued surveillance of the vehicle and developed a plan to safely apprehend the suspects. Officers disabled the vehicle and took the two occupants into custody near the 400 block of Frederick Street without incident.

During the arrest, officers located additional jewelry, US and foreign currency, along with the decoy necklace used in the strong-arm robbery.

SFPD officers developed probable cause to arrest 37-year-old Ludovic-Iustinian Ceausu and 41-year-old Claudia Voinescu.

Ceausu and Voinescu were transported to San Francisco County Jail for robbery (211 pc 2nd degree), conspiracy (182(a)(1) pc, possession of stolen property (496(a) PC), grand theft (487(a) PC), elder abuse (368 (b)(1) PC), possession of counterfeit items with the intent to defraud (475(a) PC) and possession of burglary tools (466 PC).

Voinescu was also charged with an active and outstanding out-of-county warrant for larceny.

Although arrests have been made, this remains an open and active investigation. Anyone with information is asked to contact the SFPD at [1-415-575-4444](tel:1-415-575-4444) or *Text-A-Tip* to [TIP411](tel:415-575-4411) and begin the message with SFPD.

[Watch the video on the SFPD's Vimeo](#)

SFPD CASE# 260-157-845

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