



City of Arts & Innovation

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WARNING TO RESIDENTS OF "PIGEON DROP" SCAM

RIVERSIDE, CA – Recently, the Riverside Police Department investigated a fraud scheme where an elderly man fell victim to a "Pigeon Drop" scam. A Pigeon Drop is a type of "short con" that only takes the suspects less than an hour to steal the victim's money.

THIS SCAM MOST OFTEN TARGETS SENIOR CITIZENS.

The method of the scam is a primary suspect will loiter in a busy shopping area parking lot like those of grocery or retail stores (Wal-Mart, Lowe's, Target, etc.). The typical victim is a senior citizen, most who are male and alone when observed. The primary suspect will "flash" a large amount of cash to the victim and explain that he/she needs help "donating" the money. The suspect will say they do not trust banks or are not in the country legally, and most often, the suspects are, or claim to be, foreign nationals.

After the victim has been asked to help "donate" the suspect's money, they may sometimes be enticed to keep all or part of it. The primary suspect and victim often have another "chance" meeting with a second suspect who acts as if he/she does not know the first suspect. The second suspect will say he/she also wants to help donate



the money, which causes the victim to believe he must act fast or this second suspect will get all the money.

In order for the suspects to trust the victim with their money, they will ask the victim to add money to the amount to be donated. The amount is usually \$1,000.00 or greater. Unfortunately, the victim will add his own money believing it will all go back to him since he most likely plans to keep it all as part of the enticement the suspects presented. The suspects often convince the victim to drive them to the victim's bank and home to get the money to add to the suspects' cash. In these types of cases, the suspects are usually very aware of surveillance cameras at banks and shopping centers and often avoid being caught on them.

Once the victim's cash is placed with the suspects' cash, the suspects find a way to take all the money and flee the location. The victim usually has no way to be reimbursed his money since he was the one who withdrew or removed it all.

There is no typical suspect in this sort of scam. It is a "Traveler" style crime but suspects are often different races and nationalities. The Pigeon Drop scam tends to go in waves where law enforcement will usually get 5 to 10 reports before the suspects move on to a different city.

The Riverside Police Department encourages our citizens to make your elderly family and friends aware of this scam so to not become a victim. If you do become victimized or have been approached by this or similar scams, please report it to your local law enforcement agency. To make a report with RPD, you may call our Non-Emergency number at (951) 354-2007, or go to <http://www.riversideca.gov/rpd/report/default.asp>.