



PRESS RELEASE

Pursuant to Cal Govt. Code Sect 6254(f)
San Jose Police Department
Press Information Office
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Lotto Scam Suspects Arrested

Suspect #1: Ruth Burgos-Rivera aka Martha, Hispanic female adult, DOB 12-5-59
Resident of Miami Beach, Florida

Suspect #2: Carlos Serrano, Hispanic male adult, DOB 7-16-78
Resident of Miami Beach, Florida

On 3-29-04 at 8:18AM, San Jose Police Officers Shawn McCarthy #3578 and Matthew Kurrle #3576 responded on a suspicious person call in the area of Annona Ave. and Santiago Ave. in East San Jose. The caller believed that the two people in a Jeep Cherokee at that location were possibly trying to steal money from a relative in a lottery scam. The officers arrived at the location and detained a male and a female (identified as the suspects above). The suspects gave identification cards showing that they were both from Miami Beach, Florida, and officers learned that the vehicle was rented. The officers also learned that the suspects were involved in a scheme to defraud an elderly male living nearby out of \$15,000. The officers also discovered property in the vehicle that connected them to a series of lottery scams in the San Jose area for the past few months. The suspects were arrested and taken to the San Jose Police Dept. for questioning. They were then booked into the Santa Clara County Jail for fraud, grand theft and elder abuse.

These suspects had a very distinct method of operation. The female suspect would approach a Spanish speaking elderly male or female. She would tell them that she is an illegal immigrant and ask for their help in locating an attorney or help in depositing a large sum of money. The male suspect would then stop by and help convince the victim that he/she should help suspect#1.

Suspect #1 would then produce what she claimed to be a winning lottery ticket. Suspect #2 would take the ticket and then make a cell phone call purportedly to the Lottery Commission to verify the procedure for cashing in a winning ticket. The victim would then be told that he/she would have to produce some "good faith" money, usually \$10,000 to \$20,000 to provide to the Lottery Commission. In exchange, the victims were told that they would receive a large sum of money from the Lottery Commission for helping a lottery winner.

BY: Sgt. S. Dixon #2650
DATE: 4-1-04

TIME: 9:30AM

AUTHORIZED BY: Det. Fred Mills

DATE: 4-1-04

TIME: 9:30AM

PRESS OFFICER BRIEFED BY UNIT COMMANDER (CIRCLE) **YES** NO

After the victims withdrew money from their banks (or in some case homes), and gave it to the suspects, they would then take the victims to a nearby store and tell them to go in a buy some stamps to mail to money to the Lottery Commission. Once the victims went into the store the suspects would drive away.

San Jose Police Detective Fred Mills has investigated approximately twelve similar cases in San Jose during the past few months. He has been in touch with other Bay Area Law Enforcement agencies with similar cases. It appears that there are still several suspects involved in some of these cases that have not yet been identified. Detectives Mills believes that these suspects have one or more associates, possibly in Florida and that these suspects travel to different areas of the country to commit these crimes.

Both suspects remain in custody at the Santa Clara County Jail and will be arraigned today at 1:30PM in Santa Clara County Court.

Anyone with any information on any of these cases is urged to call Detective Fred Mills of the San Jose Police Dept.'s Financial Crimes Unit at 408-277-4521. Persons wishing to remain anonymous may call Crime Stoppers at 408-947-STOP.

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