

COMMUNITY ALERT  
LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT  
OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE WEST LOS ANGELES AREA CRIME ANALYSIS DETAIL

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BURGLARY  
DISTRACTION THIEVES TARGETING THE ELDERLY

TEAMS OF DISTRACTION THIEVES HAVE RECENTLY BEEN VERY ACTIVE IN THE WLA AREA. THESE TEAMS INCLUDE MEN, WOMEN, AND SOMETIMES CHILDREN, IN VARIOUS COMBINATIONS. THESE GROUPS WILL APPROACH ELDERLY PEOPLE IN THEIR HOMES. THEY USE BOGUS EXCUSES TO GET INTO THE HOUSE, DISTRACT THE RESIDENTS AND TAKE MONEY AND JEWELRY.

PLEASE BECOME AWARE OF THE FOLLOWING SCENARIOS USED BY THE THIEVES TO GAIN ACCESS TO HOMES IN YOUR AREA. IF YOU ARE APPROACHED BY INDIVIDUALS TRYING TO GAIN ENTRY TO YOUR HOME, OR REQUESTING YOU TO EXIT YOUR RESIDENCE FOR SUSPICIOUS REASONS, REFUSE TO COOPERATE, AND CALL THE POLICE.

#1: THE TEAM WILL CLAIM THAT THEY ARE LOOKING FOR THEIR CAT THAT "MAY BE IN YOUR BACKYARD". THEY WILL ASK YOU TO HELP THEM LOOK FOR THEIR CAT. WHEN YOU ARE OUTSIDE, A SECOND PERSON WILL ENTER THE HOUSE AND TAKE MONEY OR JEWELRY.

#2: THE TEAM WILL TELL YOU THAT THEY WORK FOR A UTILITY COMPANY (DWP OR GAS COMPANY). THEY WILL INDICATE THAT THERE IS A PROBLEM IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD THAT NEEDS REPAIR. YOU MAY BE ASKED TO ASSIST THEM. THEY THEN MAY OFFER TO COMPENSATE YOU AND ASK FOR CHANGE FOR A LARGE BILL, OR ASK FOR A GLASS OF WATER. WHILE YOU ARE HELPING THEM, A SECOND TEAM MEMBER WILL ENTER YOUR HOME WITH THE INTENT TO BURGLARIZE.

#3: THE TEAM WILL APPROACH YOU AND CLAIM THEY ARE A CURRENT OR FORMER NEIGHBOR. THEY WILL ASK TO BE INVITED INTO YOUR HOME. ONCE INSIDE, THEY WILL DISTRACT YOU BY ASKING FOR A GLASS OF WATER. WHILE YOU ARE OUT OF THE ROOM, A TEAM MEMBER WILL RANSACK THE HOME LOOKING FOR MONEY AND JEWELRY.

#4: THE TEAM WILL APPROACH YOU AND CLAIM TO HAVE COMPLETED HOME REPAIRS (YOU DID NOT CONTRACT FOR) OR THEY WILL OFFER TO DO HOME REPAIRS SUCH AS ROOFING, FENCE REPAIR, OR TREE TRIMMING. THEY MAY ASK YOU TO STEP OUTSIDE TO DISCUSS WORK THAT NEEDS TO BE DONE (THEY MAY ALSO ASK FOR CASH UP FRONT). IN THIS WAY, THEY WILL DISTRACT YOU IN ORDER TO SEARCH YOUR HOME FOR MONEY OR JEWELRY.

EXAMPLE OF SUSPECT TEAM MEMBER:

\*THIS SUSPECT LAST FEMALE ROMANIAN USED THE "LOST CAT" 25-30 YEARS OLD HEAVY BUILD RUSSIAN. NO OTHER DARK BLOND HAIR ACNE SCARS SUSPECTS WERE SEEN. UNKNOWN TATTOO ON UNKNOW HAND NOTE: MOLE OVER MOUTH COULD BE ON EITHER SIDE OF MOUTH