THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

NEWS RELEASE

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Arrest of Elder Abuse / Forgery Suspects

(San Diego) On June 18, 2008 Mid City Division detectives arrested three suspects for a series of crimes including forgery, theft, robbery and elder abuse. The suspects are Keona Smith, 19; Aishah Meals, 20; and James Pearson, 52.

In February 2008, a series of crimes occurred that involved elderly female victims. In each case, the victim was shopping alone at the time of the incident. The age of the victims generally ranged from 70 to 88 years of age. The crimes all occurred inside large retail stores in shopping malls throughout the county, including San Diego, La Mesa, Chula Vista and National City. The locations most prevalent were Target and Wal Mart Stores.

The suspects were described as two young black females, one of whom was pregnant until the end of March 2008. The two females used a variety of ruses to gain the attention of the elderly victims, at which time they would distract them and remove the wallets from the victims' purses. In many cases, the victim's credit cards were used extensively within the first several hours of the crimes and then discarded. The credit cards were used at restaurants and gas stations in National City and La Mesa.

Smith, Meals and Pearson are in custody on multiple of charges. Additional charges are pending. The case was submitted to the San Diego County District Attorney's Elder Abuse Unit for prosecution.

Detectives believe there may be additional victims in these cases who have not yet come forward. If you believe you were the victim of one of these suspects, please contact the Mid City Division at (619) 516-3000.

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