

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, January 17, 2022

CONTACT: Lieutenant Adam Sharki at 619-531-2675 or asharki@pd.sandiego.gov

More than One Dozen Arrests Made in Jewelry Theft Ring

Traveling Thieves Targeted Vulnerable Community Members, Police Continue Search for More Potential Victims

San Diego – San Diego Police Department detectives have arrested 13 people in connection with a jewelry theft ring that spanned multiple communities. Beginning in early 2021, SDPD saw a rash of jewelry theft and street robbery cases that were occurring all over San Diego County. The cases involved a large group of traveling thieves who were operating nationwide. Detectives collected crime reports and intelligence from other agencies and began identifying hundreds of suspects involved in these crimes.

This group of thieves preyed on our most vulnerable community members and took advantage of their kindness to steal and profit. The loss is estimated to be in the millions of dollars. Detectives also discovered the thieves targeted specific communities where elderly and people of Asian descent live and shop.

In a typical case, the suspects approached a victim in a parking lot of a shopping center or while the victim was out for a walk in their neighborhood. The suspects asked for directions or told the victim they were robbed and needed assistance. The suspects often said they were from “Dubai” and needed help returning home. Once the victims began talking to the suspects and let their guard down, the suspects used distraction and sleight-of-hand techniques to steal necklaces, watches, rings, and cash. In some cases, when the suspect was unsuccessful in their scheme, force was used to steal the jewelry.

In the past nine months, SDPD detectives arrested 13 people in San Diego and Southern California counties. Other suspects are currently under investigation and arrests are pending. Based on our conversations with community members, we know only a very small percentage of the actual crimes have been reported by victims to the police.

In the past two weeks, detectives have made three arrests:

On January 4th, SDPD detectives booked Eduard and Floarea Ghiocel, of Romania, for their involvement in a grand theft of an elderly victim in San Diego County, which occurred in 2021.

Both had re-entered the United States from Mexico, after fleeing in 2022. The pair used false identities and were arrested. Both are wanted in several other cases in Southern California.

On January 10th, SDPD detectives booked Marco Miclescu, of Romania, for his involvement in a watch theft of an elderly victim in San Diego County. Miclescu was arrested in Texas and extradited to San Diego.

SDPD detectives request the public's help in solving additional cases in this crime series. Attached is a document containing photographs of suspects who have been identified and/or arrested for their involvement in these crimes in San Diego County.

Anyone with information regarding these incidents or these suspects is asked to call the Economic Crimes Unit at (619) 446-1036 or Crime Stoppers at (888) 580-8477.

###