



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 22, 2021**

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## **Serial Predator Charged with Sexual Battery** *Multiple women accosted in stores as they shopped*

San Diego City Attorney Mara W. Elliott has filed 14 criminal charges against a Mira Mesa man who is accused of sexually battering women he encountered while they were shopping in local supermarkets, pharmacies, and other stores.

Ji Hoon Yong, 25, was charged with seven misdemeanor counts of sexual battery and seven misdemeanor counts of lewd conduct, stemming from his interactions with seven women between July 1 to Dec. 20, 2020. The incidents took place at stores in La Jolla, Clairemont, Mira Mesa, and Kearny Mesa. Beginning around the time of the last known San Diego incident, Yong apparently shifted his activities to North County, where he was arrested and has been charged with 10 similar crimes by the San Diego County District Attorney.

Each situation was nearly identical. In store surveillance videos, a man believed to be Yong can be seen with his hands inside his pants, then grabbing his intended victim from behind and thrusting his pelvis into her backside. When confronted by victims, he nearly always apologized and said he had bumped into them by accident or he thought they were a friend.

**“For at least six months, Yong repeatedly molested unsuspecting victims while they shopped,”** San Diego City Attorney Mara W. Elliott said. **“When caught, he pretended like his unwelcome conduct was a misunderstanding. His victims knew better and reported him to law enforcement. Due to the serial nature of his actions, we believe that there may be other victims. We encourage victims and witnesses to come forward so that we can ensure justice is served.”**

In one case, at a Ralph’s store on La Jolla Village Drive on July 4, the victim alerted the manager, who chased the assailant. He ran away so quickly that he left his shoes behind, according to the police report. In another incident, at a Smart & Final in Mira Mesa on November 18, the suspect apologized to his victim, then followed her to the checkout line, where he grabbed her by the shoulders and apologized again for “scaring” her.

Yong is suspected of assaulting at least two women in separate locations on the same day, December 20, 2020. One incident took place in a CVS in Clairemont, then another happened in a Kearny Mesa Walmart.

Yong was arrested January 4 at a San Marcos Walmart, after a woman recognized him from a news report that the San Diego Sheriff's Office was seeking a man suspected of improperly touching women as they shopped. Once Yong was in custody, detectives with the San Diego Police Department were able to identify him as the perpetrator in the previous incidents, most, if not all of which were captured on store surveillance video.

Arrestment on the charges is expected next week. Yong is currently in jail with bail set at \$100,000. He is scheduled to go to trial in North County on March 3 on 10 misdemeanor charges involving incidents that took place between Dec. 20, 2020 and Jan. 4, 2021.

Prosecutors with the City Attorney's Office plan to seek a significant increase in the amount of Yong's bail. Authorities believe there are likely to be additional victims.

Members of the public who have had a similar encounter with a man of Yong's description -- a 25-year-old man of Asian descent, who stands 5-foot-10 and weighs 132 pounds -- are urged to contact a City Attorney's Office investigator at 619-533-5624.

This case was filed on behalf of the People of the State of California by Deputy City Attorney Emily Garson of the City Attorney's Domestic Violence and Sex Crimes Unit.

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