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# BULLETIN



## TORRANCE POLICE DEPARTMENT CRIME ANALYSIS

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### PIGEON DROP ADVISORY

**November 18, 2016**

**DETAILS:** A **Pigeon Drop** is a confidence trick in which a mark or "pigeon" is persuaded to give up a sum of money and / or jewelry ("good faith money") in order to prove trustworthiness and secure the rights to a larger sum of money or more valuable property like bars of gold. In reality, the scammers – suspects usually work in pairs – make off with the victims' money / valuables and the victims or marks are left with nothing.

These scams are perpetrated by adult males and females of all ages and all races. Victims are male and female, all races, often elderly and are initially approached by the suspect(s) in commercial parking lots during daytime hours.

The suspects present different scenarios to include: **1)** having inherited a large sum of money and needing assistance donating it to a church or other non-profit / philanthropic cause because they are not American citizens; for their assistance, victims are offered roughly \$100,000 **2)** needing assistance cashing a winning lottery ticket due to the suspect not being a U.S. citizen **3)** finding a bag of money in a parking lot and offering to split it with the victim. In all of these scenarios, one suspect first approaches the victim and later a second suspect inserts him or herself as a "stranger" willing to help. Suspects will often use the ruse of contacting a "lawyer" or "law firm" knowledgeable of their plight to aid in legitimizing themselves to the victims.

In the course of the scam, the suspect appears to put his money with the mark's money (in an envelope, briefcase or bag) with which the mark is then entrusted. The combined money is actually not put in the bag or envelope, but is switched for a bag full of cut up paper / newspaper. It is not uncommon for the scam to play out over the course of several hours as the victim and suspect(s) drive (in the victim's car) to the bank to withdraw money, to the victim's residence to obtain cash / jewelry and to the final location where the victim is abandoned by the suspects after having been asked to obtain medicine in a drug store, make a phone call or drive around the block.

**In recent weeks, three victims have fallen prey to pigeon drop scams in Torrance. The victims were initially contacted by the suspects at: 1) 21700 blk of Western 2) 190<sup>th</sup> / Anza 3) 19800 blk of Hawthorne.**



**REPORT ANY INFORMATION BELIEVED TO BE RELATED TO ANY  
CRIMINAL ACTIVITY TO THE TORRANCE POLICE DEPARTMENT  
AT 310.328.3456**