



EVERETT POLICE DEPARTMENT

PUBLIC ALERT

MEDIA RELEASE

March 22, 2018

Everett Police detectives, in conjunction with regional law enforcement, are investigating recent reports of people being "bumped" into, or distracted, in public areas at crowded businesses. Victims later realize their wallet was taken with their credit/debit accounts being used.

"We do not believe these crimes are isolated incidences. Rather, criminals are making coordinated efforts to victimize unsuspecting people throughout the Puget Sound," says Financial Crimes Sergeant Matt Mekelburg. "Be aware of your surroundings and take a few basic steps to protect your financial security."

At about noon on March 7th, a victim was bumped into at the self-service kiosk of Panera Bread on SE Everett Mall Way. A short time later, the victim realized her wallet was missing and almost \$14,000 was spent at Best Buy and Bed Bath & Beyond. Video shows multiple suspects using the victim's cards shortly after they were taken.

At 2 pm on March 7th, another victim was at Trader Joe's on SE Everett Mall Way. A female approached her and started asking questions. After the conversation, the victim realized her wallet was gone and several credit cards were immediately used at Target. The suspect purchased over \$3,200 in gift cards and left in a white SUV.

"The pattern of crime occurring in Snohomish County is tied to a multi-state series of thefts committed by an extremely large and organized group of individuals," says Everett Detective Jamie French. "These criminals are victimizing people from the Pacific Northwest to New York City and down to Florida." Detective French is working with multiple agencies throughout the United States and advises, "The crimes have been linked due to locations of occurrence, particularly Panera Bread and Trader Joes, and the retail locations where victims' credit cards were used. Multiple suspects work together to use distraction techniques and steal victims' wallets."

As detectives work these cases, similar crimes around the region have been connected:

- March 14th between 1-4pm: Wallet stolen at Panera Bread (Bellevue Way - Bellevue, WA) to purchase Apple, Microsoft, and Target merchandise.
- February 19th at about 2 pm: Wallet stolen at Panera Bread (Bellevue Way - Bellevue, WA) and attempted to purchase an Apple product.
- February 2nd at about 1:15 pm: Wallet stolen at Trader Joe's (SE Everett Mall Way - Everett, WA) to purchase Best Buy, Apple, and Microsoft merchandise.
- January 3rd between 2:30-2:50: Wallet stolen at Panera Bread (Factoria, WA) with \$4,000 of merchandise bought at Best Buy.
- December 9th: Suspects steal a wallet at Panera Bread (Lynnwood, WA) and purchase gift cards at nearby Safeway.
- December 9th: Credit cards stolen at Panera Bread (Woodinville, WA) used to purchase merchandise at Nordstrom's (Lynnwood, WA).
- December 9th: Purse stolen at Maggiano's Restaurant (Bellevue, WA) with credit cards used to purchase gifts cards at nearby Safeway.

Video of local suspects at: <http://bit.ly/2GQRBKo>

Anyone with information about these crimes is asked to call the
Everett Police Department TIP LINE at (425) 257-8450 or
Crime Stoppers of Puget Sound at 1-800-222-TIPS.

Prepared By:

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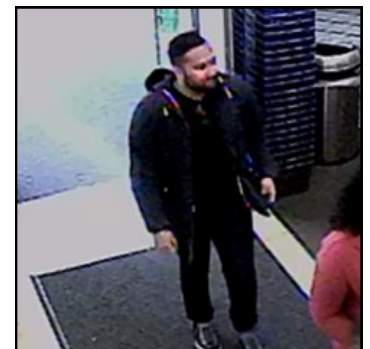
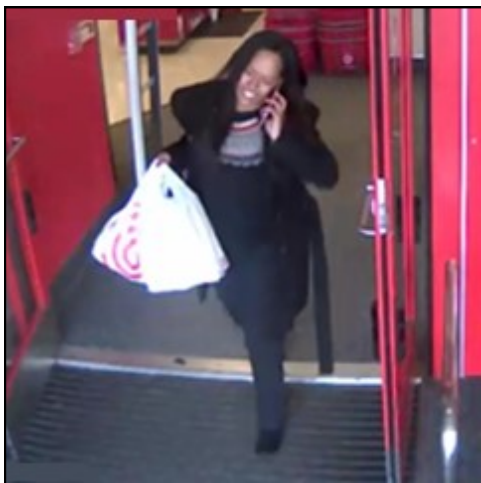
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(Same female suspects)



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