Scam Alert: 84 Year Old Woman Scammed Out of $10,000+ and Jewelry

The St. Petersburg Police is warning the public about a new version of the classic Pigeon Drop Scam. The latest victim was an 84 year old woman. Police are searching for 2 suspects (no video available):

Suspect #1 is described as a black male about 50-60 years of age, about 6’1” to 6’2” wearing a gold necklace, gold bracelet, a “nice ring”.

Suspect #2 is described as black female wearing a pink blouse, white pants, blonde hair, approximately 5’11-6’00 and heavy build

Details of the scam:
On Friday, 08/21/15, about 3:00 p.m., the 84 year old woman drove to Walmart at 3401 34th Street South and was getting out of her car when she was approached by a man. He told her that he had picked up a bag off the ground near her car and asked if it was hers. She stated no, so the man asked her what she thought he should do with the bag and she suggested he turn the bag into Walmart security. A woman approached and joined the conversation asking what was in the bag. When it was opened they discovered what appeared to be approximately $300,000 cash and a note suggesting the money was from an illicit source.

The victim and two suspects agreed to keep the money. The man said he would take the money to a friend who works at a near-by bank for advice on how to keep the money. He left briefly, returned and said the bank needed collateral in order to make sure the money was “clean”.

The female suspect stated she had collateral and pulled out what appeared to be $50,000 in cash which she
gave to the male. The victim agreed to also provide collateral and ended up driving to her home with the female suspect to get cash in excess of $10,000, as well approximately $9000 worth of jewelry.

They drove back to the Walmart lot, gave her money and jewelry to the man, who said he would be going to the bank and would return in about five minutes. The female suspect said she was going inside Walmart for a few minutes.

Neither suspect returned, and the victim’s efforts to relocate them were unsuccessful.

This case is a classic example of the old Pigeon Drop scam which usually involves two suspects, one of who claims to have found something of great value, usually a large sum of money. That suspect will approach an intended victim about having found the money and asking advice on what to do with it. The second suspect, acting as a passerby, will brought into the conversation as well and at some point they will get the victim to agree that the money should be kept and evenly divided. It will also be agreed that each of them should provided some form of collateral, usually money, to assure the sincere intentions of each other. Of course the collateral provided by the suspects is usually counterfeit or worthless and once they have the victim’s contribution in hand, they will find an excuse to separate from the victim and leave the area.

Detectives are asking the public to be on guard for this scam and to contact the police if they feel someone is attempting to perpetrate it. If you have any information on this suspect’s identities in this case, please call the St. Petersburg Police at 727-893-7780 or use the anonymous Tip-411! Text “SPPD” and your tip to 847-411 (Tip-411).