

Ruse Burglary

Home Repair
Fraud

Home Repair Fraud

- On a daily basis, con artists posing as contractors, repairmen, and utility workers, commit crimes of theft, burglary, and home repair fraud on countless senior citizens throughout the state of Illinois.
- Losses are estimated in the millions of dollars annually

Profile Of An Elderly Victim

- Female 77%
- Male 23%
- Age 65-79 92%
- Single 69%
- Married 31%
- Retired 93%
- Working 7%

When Do These Crimes Occur?

- 7:00 A.M.-12:00 P.M. 56%
- 12:00 P.M.- 5:00 P.M. 42%

Day Of The Week

- **95% of these crimes occur Monday Through Friday**
- **49% occur in the spring months**

Victim Summary

- The average fraud victim is a White Female, between ages 65-79, who lives alone in a well maintained middle class neighborhood. She is most likely to be approached at her home between 7:00 A.M. and Noon, on a weekday by two or more Male White subjects who will claim her home is in need of repair.

Who Are The Offenders?

- Career Criminals who specialize on this type of crime.
- They know the elderly are ideal victims for their crimes.
- They know the elderly frequently keep large sums of money in their homes.
- They know that most seniors are unemployed and home during the day.

Why?

- They also know that a large majority of these crimes go unreported to the Police

Method Of Operation

- Suspects cruise residential neighborhoods looking for elderly people outside their homes.
- Once located, they approach the elderly person and offer to do some sort of repair work.

Types of Repair Work

- Driveway Seal Coating.
- Tree Trimming.
- Roof Repairs.
- Chimney Repairs.
- Tuck pointing.
- Water and sewer
- ETC.

Method Of Operation

- Price quoted could be high or low, depending on the mental state of the victim.
- These criminals will take time to evaluate the mental capacities of their victims.
- If the original quote is low, the offenders will demand more money when the "work" is completed.

Method Of Operation

- Offenders will try to confuse the victim by telling them they did not understand the original agreement.
- They may say it would cost \$30.00 to seal coat the driveway then later tell the victim it was \$30.00 an inch.

Quality Of Work

- In the majority of cases, the quality is substandard.
- There have been reports of driveways being seal coated for \$20,000.00.

Who Are They?

- Male
- Various Ages
- Working alone, or on occasion in small groups of two or three
- Occasionally, females and children have been with male subjects

Vehicles

- **These offenders will drive: Pick Up Trucks, Full Sized Vans, Mini Vans, and Passenger Cars.**

Ruse Entry

- Once a victim is located, they approach, and may claim to be utility workers, city employees, cable technicians, water department workers, or contractors.
- The offenders then gain entry to the residence using the ruse of checking for a potential problem.

After Entry Is Made

- Once inside, one of the offenders will keep the homeowner occupied by flipping light switches or running water through a faucet, etc.
- While the victim is occupied, one or two accomplices will rummage through the home looking for cash and jewelry

Travel Patterns

- Offenders are highly mobile
- Suspects who live in Illinois have committed these types of crimes as far away as New York and California

Prosecution

- Offenders pick their victims wisely
- The single issue that hampers prosecution is the inability of the victims being able to identify the offenders
- Offenders change their physical appearance

Preventive Measures

- THERE IS NO, ONE SINGLE SOLUTION
 - Public Education
 - Police Training
 - Aggressive Police Tactics
 - Sharing Intelligence
 - Neighborhood Watch Groups

Police Contact

- **Oak Lawn Police**
- **Detective Tom Cronin, #280,
Senior Citizen Liaison Officer**
- **708-499-7845**
- **tcronin@oaklawn-il.gov**

CALL THE POLICE

- Call 911 if anyone rushes into your home under the pretense of being a utility worker.
- Leave the phone off the hook and try to obtain a description of the offender's and their vehicle.
- Do not confront the offender's and avoid physical contact. They are generally non-violent but do not take any chances.

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