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Quick Resolution to Downtown Armed Robbery

By Cathy Tyson

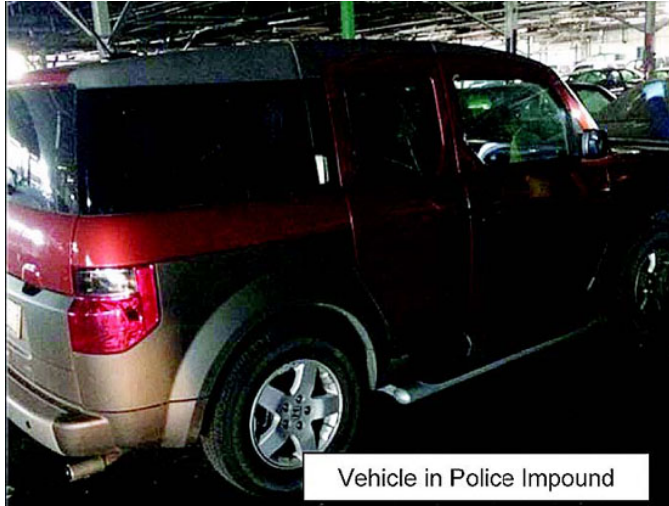


Photo provided

After ending his shift at a nearby store at 10:30 p. m. on Nov. 26, a man was approached while walking back to his car, which was parked in a lot near the corner of Deer Hill Road and First Street, by two men in their 20s wearing hoodies. One of the suspects raised his shirt and displayed a handgun tucked in his waistband, then demanded the would-be victim's wallet. The employee took off running and eventually climbed a fence onto Highway 24 to escape.

The suspects gave chase, but found more convenient victims as two other employees approached the parking lot. Upon seeing the robbers flashing their gun, the workers wisely proceeded to hand over their wallets and other personal property. Once the bad guys got the goods, they ran to a waiting orange Honda Element on First Street.

Despite the Thanksgiving holiday, the next day the search was on for the vehicle and the suspects. A neighborhood camera system in the area had images that matched a general description of the vehicle, complete with license plate number. Turns out the car had already been impounded following another robbery in Oakland, and one suspect had been arrested. Property found in the car matched what was lifted from the Lafayette victims.

"This incident is unique for the City of Lafayette, but is indicative of the incidents that can occur in any downtown area at night," said Police Chief Eric Christensen in a recent Crime Bulletin. He suggested that it's best to walk in pairs and have a flashlight or a cell phone handy, and to surrender your property if confronted. "A watch, a phone or a wallet are not worth being injured over," he said.

Christensen also confirmed by phone that the suspects and their vehicle, after leaving Lafayette, found their way to Grizzly Peak Boulevard in Berkeley where, according to news reports, they allegedly robbed and kidnapped two people, who were sitting in their car enjoying the view, and forced them to drive to an ATM and withdraw money.

Lafayette police will be increasing their patrols downtown at night, and working with businesses to ensure their employees are safe. Cops are looking for additional information regarding the incident and the vehicle - please contact the department office at (925) 283-3680 or send an email via the tip line to 94549Tip@gmail.com.

Reach the reporter at: cathy@lamorindaweekly.com

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