

Most wanted distraction burglars target the elderly

Crime-fighting charity, Crimestoppers, is today launching a list of 10 Most Wanted people sought in connection with distraction burglaries and warning people to be careful about who they let into their homes, as the traditional peak time for this crime approaches (February/March). Distraction burglary is a crime which particularly affects elderly people, the average age of a victim is 81-years-old.

Crimestoppers has been working with Operation Liberal, the unit which provides a national intelligence overview of distraction burglary crime, which has produced the list of 10 Most Wanted individuals.

Distraction burglary is any crime where a falsehood, trick or distraction is used on a house to gain, or try to gain, access to the premises to commit burglary. Violence is increasingly being used by offenders against the elderly in order to gain entry to their homes and steal their property.

Weather related distraction burglary methods have been reported from various parts of the country with the criminals using tactics such as: clearing snow off drives for a small amount, then stealing from the house when the victim goes to pay and telling victims they need to check boilers, frozen pipes and radiators because of the bad weather.

Prevention advice on this crime type is available at: www.crimestoppers-uk.org .

Lord Ashcroft, KCMG, Founder and Chair of Crimestoppers said: "Distraction burglars are clearly hideous individuals as they tend to prey on elderly, vulnerable people to rob them of life-long treasured possessions and money, by using devious tactics and in many cases, violence. Some victims suffer a decline in health and even die as a result of the trauma caused by these criminals. If you

have any information on these wanted individuals, please contact the charity Crimestoppers anonymously, we guarantee that no one will know your identity."

Dame Vera Lynn, Co-Patron of Sussex Crimestoppers branch, said: "As someone who has been a victim of burglary several times, I can't reinforce enough how frightening it is. Worse than having your possessions taken, is having your confidence stolen as well. A home is where everyone should feel safe and relaxed, not anxious and worried at what might happen. We must not let these despicable criminals get away with traumatising people and stealing treasured possessions. I fully support the charity's campaign and urge the public help bring justice to victims by passing on information they may have about distraction burglars to Crimestoppers anonymously."

Assistant Chief Constable of Derbyshire Constabulary and Association of Chief Police Officers lead for Operation Liberal, Peter Goodman, said: "Distraction burglars trick their way in to the homes of the elderly and vulnerable, generally by pretending to be an official of some kind or asking for assistance.

"Operation Liberal works together with all UK police forces to target and bring to justice those individuals who prey on the vulnerable in society. Our message is - if you're not sure who is calling, then don't open the door, check their identity first.

"There have been many recent examples of vigilant members of the public reporting suspicious behaviour to the police which has led to a number of distraction burglars being arrested. We want this to continue.

"Should anyone have information about someone they believe is carrying out these terrible crimes please call police or if you prefer, phone Crimestoppers, who will treat your call anonymously."

To view the 10 most wanted individuals visit www.crimestoppers-uk.org/wanted .

-ENDS-

For further information on Crimestoppers contact Lisa Gains, Media Officer on 020 8254 3252/07795 564313 or lisa.gains@crimestoppers-uk.org .

Notes to editors

The 10 wanted individuals are:

Name: Patrick Gilheaney **Image ref:** SU1 **Force:** Suffolk **Location:** Suffolk
Appeal summary

Gilheaney is currently sought in relation to a series of Distraction Burglary and Burglary Dwelling offences committed over a five month period between Sept 2008 and February 2009 spanning five force areas. Crimes have occurred in Suffolk, Norfolk, Staffordshire, Bedfordshire and Leicestershire, predominately against vulnerable elderly victims.

Description:

Sex: Male **Age Range:** 20 - 25 **Height:** 160 - 165 cm (approx 5' 4") **Build:** Slim
Hair Colour: Dark **Ethnic Appearance:** White European.



Name: Michael Antony O'Driscoll **Image ref:** AS2 **Force:** Avon and Somerset **Date:** 20-Oct-2009.

Summary

Males attended at the home of an elderly gentleman on the pretence that they were dealing with a plumbing problem. Subsequently stole cash.

Description

Sex: Male **Age Range:** 30 - 35 **Height:** 165 - 170 cm (approx 5' 6") **Build:** Slim
Hair Colour: Ginger/Red **Hair Type:** Short crop **Hair Length:** Short
Facial Hair: None **Ethnic Appearance:** White European **Additional Info:** Irish accent



Name: James Paul O'Driscoll **Nickname:** Mark Dunn, Stephen O'Neill
Image ref: AS1 **Force:** Avon and Somerset **Date:** 20-Oct-2009

Appeal summary

Attended at the home of an elderly gentleman on the pretence that they were dealing with a plumbing problem. Subsequently stole cash.

Description

Sex: Male **Age Range:** 30 - 35 **Height:** 175 - 180 cm (approx 5' 10")
Build: Slim **Hair Colour:** Black **Hair Type:** Short crop **Hair Length:** Cropped
Facial Hair: None **Ethnic Appearance:** White European
Additional Info: Has a southern English accent.



Name: Dennis Graham Yull Image ref: HU1 Force: Humberside
Location: Grimsby Date: 18-Aug-2009

Appeal summary

Humberside Police would like to speak to this male about a distraction burglary. Do you know where he is?

Description

Sex: Male Age Range: 55 - 60 Height: 170 - 175 cm (approx 5' 8") Build: Medium Hair Type: Receding.



Name: John Nolan **DOB:** 11/05/1987 **Image ref:** NI1 Force: Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) **Location:** Belfast **Date:** 13 November 2007

Appeal Summary

John Nolan is wanted in connection with a violent burglary of a 72 year old lady. There were 3 culprits who, on entering the house, punched the victim, knocking her to the ground. She was threatened with further violence. The attackers searched the property and made off with a substantial sum of money, leaving the victim traumatised.

Description: 5' 8", Slim Build, Blue eyes, Irish accent.



(E-FIT IMAGES):

Name: unknown Image ref: HU2 Force: Humberside Date: 21-Jan-2009
Location: Anlaby, Hull

Summary

Humberside Police are seeking the identity of a male who attended a block of elderly persons flats and gains entry by purporting to be from the water board. He is allowed access to the flat of a 92 year old female and whilst in the premises steals her purse and contents.

Description

Sex: Male Age Range: 25 - 30 Ethnic Appearance: White European



Name: unknown Image ref: DE2 Force: Derbyshire Location: Moor End, Spondon Date: 6-Nov-2009

Appeal summary

At 11.20pm on 6th November 2009 a distraction occurred at Moor End, Spondon, Derby. The method used was checking for burglaries. The circumstances are during the late evening the victim is at home alone when she has heard knocking at the back door. Concerned, she went into the front lounge and opened a small window and shouted out several times "HELLO", the victim could still hear the knocking and went into the kitchen. Here she has seen a male stood at the kitchen door, knocking. He then came into view in the kitchen window. Not opening the door, but opening the window the victim asked this male who he was and he replied something about being from the "NEIGHBOURHOOD, CHECKING BURGLARIES IN THE AREA". The victim asked for identification to which the male replied "OPEN THE DOOR AND I'LL SHOW YOU". The victim refused to do this, shut the window and returned to the lounge. Upon entering the lounge the victim could see the male leaning into the lounge through the open window. The victim states that the male was looking around the room. The male was asked to leave to which he replied "I WONT DO YOU HARM. I'M WITH THE POLICE". The victim has again asked the male to leave and the male has then become aggressive towards her and grabbed out shoving his right hand arm through the window. The victim has jumped backwards and seen that the male was wearing a cream cloth wrapped around his right hand. The male has demanded money the victim told the male that she was going to call the Police. The victim has then reached for her Carelink alarm and activated it. At this point the male has made off from the property.



Name: unknown Image ref: DE1 Force: Derbyshire Location: Stanton Road, Sandiacre

Appeal Summary

The male is sought in connection with a distraction burglary which occurred at 1pm on Wednesday 2nd December 2009 at Stanton Road, Sandiacre. The circumstances are as follows an unknown male offender entered the private dwelling on premise of being from the water board. He told the elderly victim to turn on taps and fill a bucket in the kitchen, he told him to keep the tap running because there was a problem with the water pressure. Offender stays with the victim in the kitchen during which time a second offender enters the dwelling, goes upstairs, makes search of wardrobes and steals money from within before exiting dwelling. Offender in kitchen then finishes off the work he is pretending to do and also leaves. The victim has found a substantial amount of cash missing.



Description

He is described as a white Male, 24yrs, 5'9" tall, average build, with an Irish accent, wearing a dark jumper with some kind of emblem on the chest area (which side unsure), tracksuit bottoms, white cotton gloves. He had a round face, short medium brown tidy hair, thin brown eyebrows, beady eyes, average nose, small mouth, thinnish lips.

Name: unknown Image ref: HA1 Force: Hampshire Location:
Aldershot, Hampshire Date: 4-Jun-2009

Appeal summary

A woman dressed in a uniform called at the victim's home and claimed her car had broken down outside. The victim went to assist, although the woman remained at the front door whilst the woman was trying to sort out the car. After around 4 to 5 minutes, the woman went back to her home then invited the suspect in whilst she waited for the recovery service. The suspect said she would wait with her car but left a few minutes later. The victim then discovered that several rings and a bracelet had been taken from her house.

Description

White female, 30s to 40s, 5ft 5-7ins, average build "with a motherly look". Suspect was a pretty and smiling smart lady with twinkly eyes. She had mid length blonde slightly waved hair with 'volume' in a Bob hairstyle. Suspect was in a non-descript blue colour nurse's or carer's uniform (suspect said she was a carer) with piping around the edges of the collar and sleeves. Suspect could possibly have had a type of fringe. The suspect had a natural look.



Name: unknown Image ref: HA2 Force: Hampshire Location: Preston Candover, Basingstoke
Date: 16-Sep-2009

Appeal summary

Officers have released an image of a man responsible for a distraction burglary in Preston Candover on Wednesday, September 16. Around 1.55pm a man called at the address of an elderly woman in Stenbury Drive. The man said he was from a building site nearby and that there had been a water leak so he needed to check everyone's water. The victim let him into the house and he went to examine the water pipes. A second man then entered the house via the back garden and left the gate open allowing the victim's dog to escape. She went to get the dog and on her return the two men were leaving with cash in their hands. She challenged them and they told her that she had been burgled and that they had caught the people responsible and were taking the cash to give to police. The men then left stealing around £600 which the woman had been saving to buy a new gravestone for her parents.

Description

1: White Male, aged in his 20's, 5'6/7", average build. Suspect wore all dark clothing which consisted of a jacket and trousers. He had a rubber glove on one of his hands and on the other he had some kind of mark down his finger. He had very dark hair which flopped to one side, all his features were normal and in proportion to his face, he was young looking and had a slim face. He was clean shaven and spoke quietly as witness said she struggled to hear him.



Crimestoppers

- Crimestoppers is an independent charity which helps the police to solve crimes, making communities safer. It does this by operating the 24/7 telephone number 0800 555 111 which people can ring to pass on information about crimes anonymously. They can also use our 'giving information' form via this website.
- Around 19 people are arrested and charged every day as a result of information given to Crimestoppers. One person every four days is charged with murder.
- Since Crimestoppers began in 1988, it has received over a million actionable calls, resulting in over 96,000 arrests and charges. Over £111 million worth of property has been recovered and over £179 million worth of drugs.
- In 2005, Crimestoppers launched the UK's Most Wanted on its website which allows the public to view images of criminals and pass on vital information about their whereabouts. It has been highly successful with over 800 arrests to date from 3,591 appeals posted.
- Crimestoppers UK was founded by Lord Ashcroft, KCMG, Chairman of Trustees. In 1988, he launched Crimestoppers in the Metropolitan Police area. Crimestoppers 'call to action' is built on a three-way partnership between the business community, the police and the media.

Registered charity number: 1108687

Operation Liberal

Operation Liberal, formed in 1998, consists of a team of 13 staff comprising Analysts, Researchers, Intelligence Officers, Community Safety Officer and Indexers managed by two Detective Sergeants and one Detective Inspector.

The unit provides a national overview of distraction burglary crime, highlights crime series and monitors intelligence on known criminals and Organised Criminal Groups (OCGs) who travel extensively throughout the UK to commit these vile crimes.

Operation Liberal supports national investigations into distraction burglaries. As a result of Op Liberal's work, when distraction burglars are arrested, a nationally coordinated investigation takes place with a lead force appointed to collate the evidence, supported and assisted by Operation Liberal.