



Everything Michigan

Police say Craigslist robbers targeted victims in Flint looking for deal on iPhone

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Laura Angus | Flint Journal

FLINT, Michigan — For sale: A brand new iPhone for the low price of \$300.

And your car.

For eight unwitting Craigslist shoppers, a deal for two new iPhones that seemed like a steal turned into an actual crime when they became the **victims of four armed robberies** in Flint, said Genesee County Sheriff Robert Pickell.



Brown

The scam started with an ad posted on Craigslist.org listing two new iPhone 4 cellphones available for \$300 each or \$500 for the pair, said Pickell.

The phone, which was released earlier this summer, retails for \$400, said Pickell.

The victims responded to the ad, calling "Josh" at a cellphone number listed on the ad, Pickell said. "Josh" convinced the victims that Flint was safe and arranged to meet them in a church parking lot in the middle of the day near Dupont Street and Ruth Avenue.

"This is a crime that originated in the living rooms of our victims and it ended up on the streets of the city of Flint, said Pickell.

Between July 2 and July 6, victims from Lansing, Flushing and Macomb County were robbed of more than \$700 in cash and a 1998 Grand Prix, said Pickell.



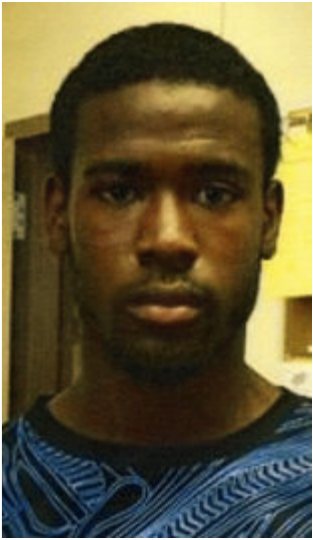
Kyles

The scam unraveled when Sgt. Sharon Dunbar from the Flint Police Department noticed the string of robberies and contacted the Genesee County Sheriff's Department and GAIN (Genesee Auto Theft Investigation Network) to coordinate a sting, said Flint Public Safety Director Alvern Lock.

"When we cooperate and we get the information, we make the arrest," said Lock.

Dunbar contacted "Josh" and arranged to meet him to purchase an iPhone the afternoon of July 6, said Pickell. She was approached by the three suspects, one who allegedly acted as look-out as the other two pulled handguns on her — one from a children's Star Wars backpack.

Officers were quickly apprehended the suspects, and the trio — Darrius C. Brown, 17, Bobby Kyles, 16, and Jacoby Morris, 15 — are now facing conspiracy to commit armed robbery and weapons charges. All three have been charged as adults, and there are additional charges pending against them.



Morris

Pickell said shoppers should protect themselves by buying from local businesses, rather than seek deals online, because it's easier to hold them accountable if there's a problem.

"Good things can happen on the Internet, but as many good things that happen — bad things can happen," said Pickell.

Lock said consumers should also be wary of online buys that are well below retail prices.

"If the deal is too good to believe, it probably is," he said.

Officials from Craigslist could not be reached for comment.

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