

San Francisco Police Arrest Suspects in TV News Crew Robbery 21-031

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On February 6, 2021, at approximately 6:50 PM, a local television news crew was reporting on a story from Bryant Street near the eastbound I-80 Bay Bridge Ramp. Two suspects exited a dark-colored, four-door Lexus and demanded the news crew surrender their news camera. The suspects' hands were concealed under their clothing, simulating that they each had a firearm. The victims surrendered the news camera, and the suspects fled the scene in the Lexus, traveling eastbound on I-80. The Lexus was driven by another suspect that remained in the car. The victims were not injured.

Moments later, several San Francisco Police solo-motorcycles drove upon the scene and were flagged down by the victims who told them they had just been robbed. Two of the officers drove onto the eastbound freeway in an effort to locate the suspect vehicle while another officer obtained suspect information and broadcast their description over SFPD radio channels.

Additional officers from Southern Police Station responded to assist in the investigation. One of the victims remembered the suspect vehicle license plate number. A computer check revealed that the registered owner lived on Treasure Island (T.I.). SFPD officers later located the vehicle near Striped Bass and 12th Streets on T.I. Officers conducted a traffic stop and detained the occupants, a 20-year-old male, and a 15-year-old male.

An officer recognized the driver of the Lexus from prior police contacts and knew that he usually drove a white Honda Accord. The officers located the Honda nearby at the end of Flounder Court. The officers saw that it was occupied by two additional subjects who were later identified as 18-year-old Ronnell Edward Johnson of Treasure Island and 21-year-old Romell Boyland of San Francisco.

Officers approached the Honda and saw a large-sized video camera on the back seat that was clearly visible through the windshield.

A consumer-grade video camera was also located in the back seat. This camera was reported stolen in a robbery that had occurred on February 6, 2021, at approximately 5:45 PM on the 1300 block of Haight Street. In this incident, two suspects exited the passenger side of a dark-colored car driven by a third suspect. The suspects demanded the victim's camera. The victim feared for his safety, dropped the camera, and backed away. The victim was not injured.

Through the course of an investigation, officers developed probable cause to arrest Johnson and Boyland for the robbery of the news crew. Johnson was later booked for Robbery (211 PC), Possession of Stolen Property (496(a) PC), and Conspiracy (182(A)(1) PC), and Boyland was booked for Possession of Stolen Property (496(a) PC), Conspiracy (182(A)(1) PC), and a probation violation. Boyland is on probation in San Francisco for a prior aggravated assault case.

The detained individuals — the 20-year-old male and 15-year-old male, who was located in the suspect vehicle, a Lexus — were released at the scene by SFPD officers pending further investigation.

The booked individuals — Boyland, 21, and Johnson, 18 — are both in custody in county jail, pending charging decisions by the District Attorney's Office.

The stolen camera was recovered from the back seat of the Honda and later returned to the news crew.

San Francisco Police Robbery Detail investigators are handling these two cases.

The investigation into the robbery on Haight Street is ongoing.

Anyone with information on either of these incidents is asked to call the SFPD 24-hour tip line at [1-415-575-4444](tel:1-415-575-4444) or Text a Tip to [TIP411](sms:4155754444) and begin the text message with SFPD. You may remain anonymous.

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