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San Francisco Police Arrest Suspect Involved in Multiple Hate Related Crimes on MUNI 23-041

April 20, 2023 | 7:31 PM

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At approximately 9:30 am, on Thursday February 16, 2023, an incident occurred on a MUNI bus in the area of Divisadero Street and Geary Boulevard. During the incident, an unknown male suspect uttered racially charged language to an Asian female passenger on the bus. An unknown bystander intervened and told the male suspect to "stop." The suspect turned his attention to the bystander and threw an egg at him causing it to break open on him. The suspect then got off the bus, threw at least one more egg at the bus, and fled the scene on foot.

The incident was not immediately reported to the SFPD, however the SFPD opened an investigation into the incident, which is being led by the Investigations Bureau.

Through the course of the investigation, a suspect was identified and believed to have been involved in at least two other recent incidents, described below. Investigators created a crime bulletin to locate the suspect.

On February 13, 2023 at approximately 10:17 a.m., San Francisco Police officers from Northern Station responded to the area of O'Farrell Street and Van Ness Avenue regarding a report of an assault on a MUNI driver. Officers arrived on scene and met with the victim, an Asian male, who stated that he was advised by a passenger that another passenger spit on someone and was using threatening language. The victim told the suspect exit the bus, and the suspect used hateful language and spit on the victim before fleeing the scene.

On February 23, 2023, investigators contacted a victim who believed they had an encounter with the same suspect after seeing him in a video on social media. The victim, an Asian female, told investigators she was on a MUNI bus on December 25, 2022 when the suspect made derogatory comments about her ethnicity and gender and threw food at her.

On April 14, 2023, San Francisco Police officers from Tenderloin Station were patrolling the area of the 500 block of Jones Street when they recognized the suspect depicted in the bulletin. Officers took 44-year-old Joseph Benjamin into custody. Benjamin was booked at San Francisco County Jail on charges of two counts of battery committed against transportation worker or passenger (243.3 PC) and two counts of hate crime (422.6 PC).

While an arrest has been made, this remains an open investigation. Anyone with information regarding these cases is asked to contact the San Francisco Police Department SFPD 24-hour-tip line at 1-415-575-4444, or Text a Tip to TIP411 and begin the message with SFPD. You may remain anonymous.

SFPD Cases: 230118366, 230106565, 230133405

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