

Vegas police seek suspect in several off-Strip casino heists

Written by Administrator
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LAS VEGAS >> Police have gone public with pleas to identify a man believed to be responsible for several recent robberies of cashiers at casinos in neighborhoods off the Las Vegas Strip.

Las Vegas police on Wednesday released a media statement tracing the series of heists to November 2022, and posted video on the internet showing surveillance camera clips of two vehicles and a person wearing hooded sweatshirts, gloves, masks and sneakers.

Details were not provided about where and when the videos were recorded. Investigators have not disclosed details about robberies reported: Nov. 16 at the Gold Coast casino several blocks west of the Strip; Dec. 12 at Green Valley Ranch in Henderson; Dec. 20 at the Silverton, south of the Strip; and Dec. 24 at the Rampart Casino in northwest Las Vegas.

Police public affairs officers did not immediately respond Thursday to messages about the cases.

The police statement described the man detectives are looking for as about 25 to 35 years old and between 6-foot-1 and 6-foot-3 tall. They said he was seen driving two vehicles that had been reported stolen: a dark gray Chevrolet Cruze and a silver Mazda 6.

The heists happened even though casinos in Las Vegas bristle with surveillance cameras and are patrolled by security officers. Employees are typically told to comply during a robbery to avoid injuries.

Mehmet Erdem, associate professor of hotel operations and technology at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, told the Las Vegas Review-Journal that casino companies don't want violence, injuries or deaths.

"There is a very intentional effort to de-escalate," Erdem said. "So it's common sense to minimize anything that's going to possibly escalate the situation."

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Las Vegas police have identified suspects and made arrests in two other robberies in recent months at casinos on the resort-lined Las Vegas Strip: the Nov. 16 arrest of Zubaid Al Jarmi in a heist a week earlier at Resorts World and the Jan. 8 arrest of James Booth several hours after a robbery at Caesars Palace.

Al Jarmi, 25, who was on probation after his conviction in a robbery at the Venetian in 2020, fled in a waiting taxi and later returned to Resorts World, according to his arrest report. He has pleaded not guilty to a federal charge of interference with commerce by robbery and free on bond while awaiting trial in U.S. District Court in Las Vegas.

Booth, 37, is jailed on \$25,000 bail pending a Jan. 25 preliminary hearing before a Las Vegas judge on a felony armed robbery charge. Court records do not reflect the name of his public defense attorney.

Michael Green, a UNLV history instructor, called casino robberies in Las Vegas crimes of opportunity and on Thursday attributed the frequency in recent weeks to economic stresses including rising inflation and the nation's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I do think what we've been through in the last three years has led to a little more desperation," Green said.

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