



Legislation Text

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Congratulations to Sergeant Cuong “Ted” Nguyen, recipient of the City of Coral Gables “Officer of the Month Award,” for the month of October 2020.

ACTION/RECOMMENDATION:

I nominate Sergeant Ted Nguyen for Officer of the Month for October 2020.

BACKGROUND:

On the following dates: 9/30/2020, 10/05/2020, 10/ 10/2020, and 10/15/2020, there have been four bank robberies during the same afternoon time frame in Coral Gables. In each incident, the offender, who was wearing a face covering because of COVID-19 protocols, would pass a note demanding money to the bank tellers. The FBI's Violent Crimes Task Force responded to take the primary role in investigating these crimes and CGPD Crimes Against Person's Unit responded to assist with the investigations. The FBI Task Force advised CGPD that their investigation led them to a suspect who is currently on probation for bank robbery and who had recently been released from prison. Their suspect closely matched the physical description of our bank robber and had similarly utilized notes demanding money passed to bank tellers in the past to facilitate the commission of his crimes.

Sergeant Nguyen supervises the Crimes Against Persons Unit, which one of their many responsibilities includes investigating robberies. Sergeant Nguyen recognized a pattern that the bank robber would attempt to rob a bank every five days and Sergeant Nguyen observed from the bolo photographs that although the clothing the offender wore to commit the robberies was different in each incident, the offender appeared to be wearing the same black shoes with white color soles in all of the incidents. On 10/20/2020, Sergeant Nguyen decided to act and enlisted the assistance of Detective McKee to conduct a mobile surveillance of the Coral Gables downtown area banks during the afternoon hours. Sergeant Nguyen was driving his unmarked police vehicle at the 200 block of Alhambra Circle when he observed a male wearing a dark shirt/shorts, like what the offender wore during the 9/30/2020 robbery walking towards Salzedo Street. Also, the male was wearing black shoes with white soles, like what the offender wore in all the robberies. Sergeant Nguyen began to watch the male and alerted Detective McKee, who was nearby in another unmarked police vehicle, of his observations. Sergeant Nguyen observed that the male appeared to be pacing and scanning the area. The male began to walk North on Salzedo Street then walked West into an alley. Sergeant Nguyen advised Detective McKee who positioned himself on the other side of the alley and located the male who took evasive action. Detective McKee soon thereafter took the male into custody. The male was identified as Aaron Honaker, who was not the same suspect that the FBI was pursuing. Search incident to arrest revealed a notebook with the names of several banks listed on it and two notes, like those used in our previous bank robberies. The FBI Task Force responded to the scene and took over the investigation.

The FBI subsequently interviewed the male at CGPD where he made a full confession to all the bank robberies that he committed in Coral Gables and one bank robbery that he committed in near-by Aventura, Florida.

SYNOPSIS/CONCLUSION:

Sergeant Nguyen's insight and initiative were exceptional and directly led to the apprehension of a bank robber responsible for the bank robberies in Coral Gables and one in Aventura. I strongly feel that he is deserving of the Officer of the Month Award and I hope that you agree.