

Man Arrested For Robbery After Pepper Spraying Victim Before Fleeing With Stolen Goods

Costa Mesa Police Department officers arrested Matthew Chima Udechukwu Tuesday after he met a stranger under the guise of purchasing goods but instead pepper sprayed the victim in the face before fleeing with stolen property.

At about 12:15 p.m. Tuesday, officers responded to a report of a robbery that had just taken place. The 18-year-old male victim was selling a pair of designer shoes that he had advertised on a resale app, and Udechukwu had met with the victim to purchase the shoes. After inspecting the shoes, it is suspected that Udechukwu pepper sprayed the victim in the face, incapacitating him, and fled on foot with the stolen shoes.

Costa Mesa officers quickly connected the suspect to a similar, previous incident that occurred on May 12, 2017. At about 12:48 p.m., officers had responded to the parking lot on the 1700 block of Adams Avenue, to take a report from a 24-year-old male victim, who was selling a backpack.

The suspect in that incident had pepper sprayed the victim in the face before fleeing the scene with the victim's backpack. During the investigation into that first incident, officers identified Udechukwu and obtained a search warrant for the suspect's home, which officers served after the second incident.

At approximately 1 p.m. on Tuesday, officers went to Udechukwu's residence at the 2700 block of Mesa Verde Drive East and established a perimeter and observation of his

apartment. Detectives subsequently arrived with the search warrant and after knocking on the door with no response and knowing the suspect was home, entry was forced into the apartment and Udechukwu was taken into custody for two counts of robbery.

All stolen property was recovered during the search.

The investigation is ongoing. Anyone with additional information or who believes they have been a victim is encouraged to contact Detective Chamness at (714) 754-5197.