

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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UPDATE: Suspect Arrested for Attempted Kidnapping Connected to Second Mission Valley Case

San Diego – The suspect arrested by San Diego Police on Thursday was charged with the attempted kidnapping of two children in separate incidents near Mission Valley Mall that occurred on Tuesday and Thursday. Using various investigative leads, SDPD was able to successfully take 42-year-old Rene Lujan of San Diego into custody after the department's Automated License Plate Reader system aided officers in locating the suspect's vehicle used in relation to Tuesday's attempted kidnapping.

At about 1:30 p.m. on June 18, a mother was walking next to her daughter who was pushing her younger sibling in a stroller on the east side of the mall. The family walked past the suspect, and he began to follow them before grabbing the six-year-old girl and lifting her off the ground. He walked a couple of feet in the opposite direction while carrying the girl until she began screaming and he released her.

The suspect, now identified as Lujan, fled on foot westbound through the mall. SDPD's Eastern Division responded to the scene and, during the investigation, was able to gain a description and license plate of the car the suspect used to flee from the scene.

The license plate was entered into the department's License Plate Reader (LPR) database. The system alerted officers Thursday afternoon that the vehicle had passed under an LPR reader in Downtown, San Diego, prompting an immediate attempt to find and stop the car (see LPR photo below). Lujan and his vehicle were located and stopped on State Route 94 near Home Ave., and he was taken into custody.

A second attempted kidnapping of a five-year-old girl with very similar circumstances and suspect description also occurred at Mission Valley Mall just after 2 p.m. on Thursday. Through the investigation, SDPD was able to connect the suspect to that incident as well. Lujan was booked for both cases on Thursday.

Anyone with further information about the crimes should contact the SDPD's Eastern Division at (858) 495-7900 or Crime Stoppers at (888) 580-8477.



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