

Deputy's Gumshoe Work Nabs Two Robbery Suspects

(Oct. 7, 2003) Cell phone records, the Internet and some solid gumshoe detective work by a Sheriff's deputy has resulted in multi-year jail terms for two men convicted in September of a robbery on the Metro Green Line.

It began in late February, when two men robbed a passenger at gunpoint at the Crenshaw station. The victim's jacket, cell phone and cash were taken.

Detective Ron Smith, a 12-year Sheriff's Department veteran assigned to the case, learned that the victim's girlfriend had called the stolen cell phone and had a brief conversation with a possible suspect.

Obtaining a search warrant, Smith reviewed the phone records and focused on a series of calls apparently made by the suspects. The Internet's reverse phone directory helped him locate a woman who identified two men.

The LAPD provided Smith with the men's arrest records which included phone numbers he was able to match with names and numbers the suspects apparently called using the victim's cell phone.

With this information in hand, Smith tracked down the two suspects – each of whom blamed the other for the robbery. One man was sentenced to four years in prison, the other was given a 15-year sentence.

There was nothing "hocus-pocus" in the case, says Smith's boss, Sgt. Luis Nunez. "Simplicity is genius. It was just good investigative work."

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