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Suspect in attack on Realtor is arrested

Police find the victim's credit card and driver's license at James Parcher's house after they arrest him at a pawnshop.

By GRAHAM BRINK and JUSTIN GEORGE
Published May 26, 2006

TAMPA - An investigation into suspicious pawnshop sales led to the arrest of a man wanted in a widely publicized beating of a real estate agent in March.

Tampa police detectives arrested 26-year-old James Parcher on Wednesday after he tried to sell stolen power tools at a pawnshop, according to a police report.

A search of Parcher's home unearthed Realtor Julie Roberts' credit cards and driver's license.

After contacting Roberts, detectives said they realized they had the man who pistol-whipped her after she showed him homes for several hours in March.

"I couldn't be happier," Roberts said Thursday, her right arm still in a splint.

The attack on Roberts sent a chill through Tampa Bay area real estate agents, who were warned to be on guard for suspicious clients.

Police Detective Paul Mumford said a check of pawnshops revealed the name of a man who made 10 recent transactions, a red flag that suggests someone trying to sell stolen goods.

Detectives alerted area pawnshops to be on the lookout for the man. On Wednesday, a pawnshop employee called detectives to tell them the man was in the shop trying to sell power tools.

After finding Roberts' personal items in Parcher's home, detectives called her and asked whether she had been a victim of a recent crime.

"I'm the Realtor who was robbed and beaten back in March," she told them. Her case was widely featured on television and in local

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Roberts picked Parcher out of a photo lineup. St. Petersburg police plan to charge him with aggravated battery, armed robbery and burglary.

On March 3, a well-spoken, clean-cut man dressed in a black leather blazer and dress pants told Roberts he was a Drug Enforcement Administration agent relocating from Naples and had only weeks to find a home.

Roberts, 48, took him to several houses. The man measured rooms and discussed financing. He seemed like a serious buyer.

He did not flinch when Roberts took him back to her crowded real estate office where everyone could see him and his vehicle.

Later that afternoon, he said he wanted to return to a house on 14th St. N in St. Petersburg. He needed to measure the master bedroom to make sure his entertainment center would fit.

Roberts pulled out her measuring tape and heard him take two hard steps toward her. The man hit her in the head with a pistol. Roberts fell to her knees. She turned to see him holding a gun and a 12-inch hunting knife.

Several times, he threatened to kill her if she didn't obey him. He tied her hands behind her back with plastic cable ties.

When the man went out to the car, Roberts tried to escape, but he came back in before she could get through a window. He put her in a closet and told her not to come out. When Roberts heard the man leave, she made it out the window and to a neighboring home.

Her car was ransacked. Some of her jewelry was taken. And he used her ATM card to take several hundred dollars. Roberts' right elbow was broken.

Parcher served about eight months in prison last year after violating probation on charges of dealing in stolen property and providing false information to a pawnbroker, according to the Florida Department of Corrections.

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