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Police Link Attacks On Five Florida, Georgia Real Estate Agents

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BRUNSWICK, Ga. -- Police in Florida and south Georgia are looking for a robber who has attacked several real estate agents while posing as a prospective buyer of a luxury home.

The cases date to early February and span a range of hundreds of miles between robberies.



Brunswick real estate agent Bene Lance (pictured, left) was threatened with pepper spray and tied up last Thursday while showing a vacant house.

Her diamond rings were taken.

Investigators believe the same man also committed abduction-robberies in Florida's Flagler, Volusia and Brevard counties, as well as Lowndes County in south Georgia, said Lt. Ted McDonald of the Glynn County Police Department.

"There's no evidence any of these crimes are sexually oriented," McDonald said Wednesday. "It appears robbery is the only motive we can identify."

Other people may be assisting the robber, he said.

The suspect is described as a large man with brown hair and a mustache and goatee. He is reported between 5 feet 8 inches and 6 feet 4 inches tall, weighing more than 300 pounds.

On Monday, Glynn County police released a sketch (pictured, right) of the suspect, based on the Brunswick victim's description.

Police say the man could be driving one of two suspect vehicles:

- A green, compact car -- possibly a Ford Escort -- with a Florida license plate.
- A full-size Chevrolet extended-cab pickup truck, gold or pewter in color, with gray primer spots.



McDonald said the series of robberies at vacant homes began in February in Valdosta.

In each case, the real estate agent was robbed by a man posing as a prospective buyer interested in a luxury home. He bound the victim with plastic tie restraints or duct tape and forced them into a closet or bathroom.

The robber then stole jewelry, cash, credit cards and cellular telephones before fleeing, according to Georgia and Florida investigators.

"The description matches, the M.O. is the same in all these cases. We're confident that it's the same guy," said Capt. David Arnold of the Lowndes County Sheriff's Office.

The Glynn County case occurred after several failed attempts, McDonald said.

"We've confirmed that he attempted to lure other real estate agents to an empty house for sale on the same day that this lady was kidnapped and robbed," McDonald said. "He also called at least two other real estate companies that day."

McDonald said the robber has used a different alias in each case.

Real estate agents should take precautions when showing homes, such as checking a buyer's references or bringing someone else along for the home showing, McDonald said.

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