



City of Arts & Innovation

PRESS RELEASE

Police Department
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Chief of Police

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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POLICE ARREST SUSPECT IN CHILD SEXUAL ASSAULT INVESTIGATION

RIVERSIDE, CA – On Wednesday, July 18, 2018, at 5:03 p.m., a father and his two young children were at the SPC Jesus S. Duran Eastside Public Library, located at 4033 Chicago Avenue in the Eastside neighborhood of Riverside, when his six-year-old son went to the restroom on his own. Video cameras at the library captured the boy walking toward this restroom as an unknown Hispanic male suspect watched. The suspect followed after the victim and into the restroom where a sexual assault occurred. After the assault, the suspect quickly fled the library on foot and through the shopping center toward University Avenue. The victim's father learned of the assault and reported it to library staff. Riverside Police Officers responded, began an investigation, and conducted an exhaustive search of the area for the suspect.

Detectives from the Sexual Assault – Child Abuse Unit assumed the investigation and were able to quickly identify the suspect as Juan Francisco Palacios, a 29-year-old male transient living in Riverside. Once identified, detectives coordinated their efforts to locate Palacios with members of the Riverside County S.A.F.E. (Sexual Assault Felony Enforcement) Task Force, Riverside County Probation, and the Riverside Police Department's METRO Team (SWAT). The METRO Team also utilized their partnership with the United States Marshals Service in the search for the suspect.



On Sunday, July 22, 2018, at 3:36 p.m., Riverside Police Officers were called to the main Riverside Public Library, located at 3581 Mission Inn Avenue, regarding a subject seen matching the description of Palacios. When officers arrived, the subject was safely detained and identified as the wanted suspect. Palacios was arrested and taken to the police station for questioning by detectives. He was later booked into the Robert Presley Detention Center for a single charge of sexual assault against a minor under the age of 10 and probation violations. Palacios is currently on probation for possession of child pornography and required to register as a sex offender.

If anyone has information regarding this investigation, please contact Detective Daniel Mercadefe at (951) 353-7120 or dmercadefe@riversideca.gov, or Detective Stacie Ontko at (951) 353-7121 or sontko@riversideca.gov.

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