Fake 'gold courier' arrested near Kanab

Part of international fraud scheme originating in Türkiye

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KANAB, Utah — A man was arrested in Kanab Sunday for taking part in what police are calling the "gold courier" scam.

Satnam Singh, 26, was booked into Kane County Jail for Attempted Theft, Prohibited Uses of Identification Card, and Pattern of Unlawful Activity.

Booking documents say the investigation began June 9 when Kanab City Police were contacted by the husband of a woman who was preparing to travel to Las Vegas to meet with someone claiming to be with the FBI.

After making contact with the victim and convincing her not to go, officers learned that it had all begun back in April when she received a message on her phone saying it was "infected and her banking accounts were in jeopardy."

When the woman called the number in the message, the person who answered convinced her to make multiple wire transfers totaling in over $100,000 between April 27 and May 6. After that, she was contacted by someone else identifying himself as an FBI agent tasked with getting her money back.

On May 20, the "agent" convinced her to withdraw money from all of her accounts and buy gold. Two weeks later, June 2, the victim purchased over $95,000 in gold from a store in St. George, giving it to a courier who was dispatched by the "agent" the next day.

One week after that, the "agent" told the victim to meet with him in Las Vegas, and to bring her passport and banking cards so he could "could sign over her money and gold back to her." This prompted the initial call to Kanab City Police.

After convincing the victim not to comply, officers began texting the "agent," posing as the victim. He once again instructed the victim to empty her bank accounts and purchase gold that would be picked up by a courier for safekeeping. Officers replied saying the victim had purchased $72,000 in gold coins, sending a photo of the gold and a receipt, arranging for the courier, Singh, to come and retrieve it.

On June 13, Singh arrived at the victim's home and picked up a box he believed contained the gold coins, whereupon he was immediately taken into custody. During the arrest, Singh dropped one of his cellphones. A detective picked up the phone and found WhatsApp messages between Singh and the "agent," showing the details of the scheduled pickup, including the photos of the gold coins sent by police. They also found a fake Arizona ID card with a fake name.

During the subsequent interrogation, Singh explained he had driven from California to Kanab at the "agent's" instruction. He further explained that he was given the job by two friends in California who know the "agent" personally, revealing that he was calling and giving orders from Türkiye.

Singh then explained how the "gold courier scam" worked, stating that it often originates in countries like Türkiye and involves many people. People impersonating federal agents convince victims to drain their bank accounts to purchase gold. Then, couriers working in or near the area of the scam are recruited to pick up the gold.

Singh is currently being held without bail, pending trial.