



SANTA CRUZ POLICE DEPARTMENT
155 Center Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

MEDIA RELEASE



DATE/TIME: August 22, 2017

LOCATION: 900 Block of Pacific Ave.

TOPIC: Serial Groper Arrested

CASE NUMBER: 17S-06818

INFORMATION:

Police arrested Frank Benavidez for groping several women today on Pacific Avenue. A quick-acting SCPD Officer Burnham stopped the suspect, who is a 290 registrant in a series of sexually motivated attacks.

On Tuesday, August 22, 2017, at about 11:07 a.m., Santa Cruz Police responded a call of sexual battery that had just occurred in the 900 block of Pacific Avenue. The first victim, a woman had been walking on the sidewalk when Frank Benavidez grabbed and physically assaulted her. The victim pushed the suspect off. However, he attacked her for the second time. Two good Samaritans who witnessed the attack intervened. The suspect, Frank Benavidez then ran across the street and grabbed another woman from behind. The victim fought off the suspect by punching and kicking him. The suspect went after a third female victim. He grabbed, groped and threatened to rape her.

Within minutes Santa Cruz Police located the suspect Frank Benavidez, 43 years old from Salinas. Frank Benavidez is a recently registered transient sex offender in the City of Santa Cruz.

Detectives are reviewing video surveillance in the area. Investigators believe there are additional victims in the series of groping attacks in the City of Santa Cruz.

Frank Benavidez was arrested for multiple counts of assault with intent to commit rape, sexual battery, and false imprisonment.

We are asking for the public's help in identifying any additional victims with whom Frank Benavidez may have had contact. Please call the Santa Cruz Police Department Investigations Unit at (831) 420-5820.

SCPD is also working with the Commission for the Prevention of Violence Against Women to encourage and connect victims with resources and prosecute crimes against women.

For additional information, contact: Joyce Blaschke

Phone: (831) 420-5844

Anonymous tips can also be sent to the police department through our Tip Line (831) 420-5995, or from our Website; www.santacruzpolice.com. Tipsters can also submit an anonymous tip via our smartphone app or from an SMS text. Visit our Website for instructions.

Photo of Frank Benavidez

