

5 CHARGED IN PLOT TO ROB JEWELER IN SOUTHFIELD - POLICE SAY SHOP OWNER AND FAMILY TARGETED, WATCHED

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For at least three months, the men mapped out their plan to kidnap the owner of Darakjian Jewelers in Southfield and his family, force the man to open his store and rob the business, police announced Tuesday.

But police were tipped to the plot, and the five men are now charged with conspiracy to commit armed robbery and conspiracy to commit unlawful imprisonment. The men are in the Oakland County Jail and are expected in Southfield's 46th District Court on Monday for preliminary examination conferences. Charged are Carlos Alberto Soler Norona, 44, of Royal Oak, and Julio Cesar Repilado Licorish, 37, of Lansing, who are both originally from Cuba; Lester Jennings Bush, 20, of Hazel Park and Henry Stankivich Bush, 32, of Port Huron, who are brothers; and **Huley Oscar Kennedy**, 31, of Detroit.

This isn't the first time a jeweler and his family have been targeted by thieves. In 2002, Livonia jeweler Marco Pesce, his three children and his mother were killed at Pesce's home by two men planning to steal jewels. Their killers were both convicted and sentenced to life in prison.

"We did not want what transpired in Livonia ... to act itself out again," said Southfield Police Chief Joseph Thomas.

Southfield police received information Dec. 15 about the plan. Thomas said the men, who had acquired handguns, an assault weapon and a shotgun, had been watching the store, the owner and his family and planned a Saturday robbery.

On Thursday, police arrested the men and recovered the weapons and cocaine. Thomas said more than a dozen police departments, the sheriff's offices in Oakland and Macomb counties and other law enforcement agencies assisted in the case.

Thomas said police also found written plans for the robbery. In addition to the owner and his wife, the men planned to possibly kidnap their two children and a grandparent. The family members have not been identified, but police said they live in Oakland County.

A call to the jewelry store owner Tuesday was not returned. Edward Cibor, chief of the warrants division in the Oakland County Prosecutor's Office, said one of the men - whom he did not identify - had served time in prison and had alluded to using violence. "If the circumstances became difficult, that he would take what action needed to take against police or anyone else," including shooting people," Cibor said.

But, Cibor said this information, which he said was provided by an informant, wasn't enough to charge any of the men with conspiracy to commit murder. The men face up to life in prison if convicted of conspiracy to commit armed robbery.

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ILLUSTRATION: Photo

CAPTION:

Lester Jennings Bush

Julio Cesar Repilado Licorish

Carlos Alberto Soler Norona

Huley Oscar Kennedy

CAPTIONWRITER: Henry Stankivich Bush

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