

Realtor Attacked, Tied Up While Showing Home

OTTUMWA, Iowa -- An Ottumwa realtor got the scare of her life Friday when police said she was brutally beaten, tied up and robbed while showing a home.

Police said 53-year-old Kathy Sorak was lured to 1120 North Court Street by two men who pretended to be interested in buying the home.

"She went through the house with the people. They then asked her to see the basement. Once they were in the basement they attacked her, put a knife to her throat, assaulted her and then tied her up," Ottumwa Police Chief Jim Clark said.

Clark said the two men stole her cell phone and some cash. They then went outside for a moment, and Sorak managed to free herself and hide in a bedroom upstairs, investigators said. Police said she then sent emails to friends asking for help.

A 911 call from a friend detailed the scene:

Caller: "Hi, This is Nancy Menke from Coldwell Banker. I just got an email from Kathy Sorak, who's a realtor.

911 Operator: "OK."

Caller: "She's been attacked at 1120 North Court."

911 Operator: "1120 North Court?"

Caller: "Uh, huh. I don't think it's a joke. I don't know and I don't want to go over there by myself."

Police arrested Matthew Howard and Carl Lennie and charged both men with first-degree robbery.

Police said the men were hiding at 513 North Court, an apartment just a few blocks away. Investigators would not say what brought them to the men, but said they each have a lengthy criminal record.

"This doesn't happen. We've never had this happen in Ottumwa before," Clark said. "For one thing, real estate agents are not traditionally targets."

Police said they have no reason to believe the suspects were specifically targeting Sorak. Howard and Lennie are being held at the Wapello County Jail each on a \$25,000 bond. Police said the investigation into the incident is ongoing. Additional charges are pending.