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Moscow Jewelry Store Clerks Claim Hypnosis After $37,000 Heist

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Two jewelry store clerks claim they were duped out of 1 million rubles ($37,000) in merchandise by a mysterious woman who hypnotized them into believing that worthless scraps of paper were actually 5,000 ruble notes, Life News reported Tuesday.

The incident occurred at the Golden Style jewelry store in a north Moscow shopping mall, where surveillance cameras showed the unidentified woman go into the store for about 90 minutes.

"She liked 14 items," one clerk told the news site. "She handed over the money, two envelopes with about 1 million 80 thousand rubles inside. We counted it."

The cashier put the envelopes into a safe, but discovered several hours later that they contained just scraps of paper. The clerks claim they were hypnotized into believing that the bits of paper were actually money, although police were skeptical.

"Whether she was using a hypnosis technique is currently difficult to determine," a police source told Life News. "It's possible that she just skillfully duped the sales clerks when she was handing over the money then taking it back."

Surveillance video showed the woman walking around the mall for some time before going into the jewelry store, which does not have a camera.

"What she was searching for is unclear," a police source told Life News. "Maybe she was on the lookout for a store that didn't have a video camera."

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