

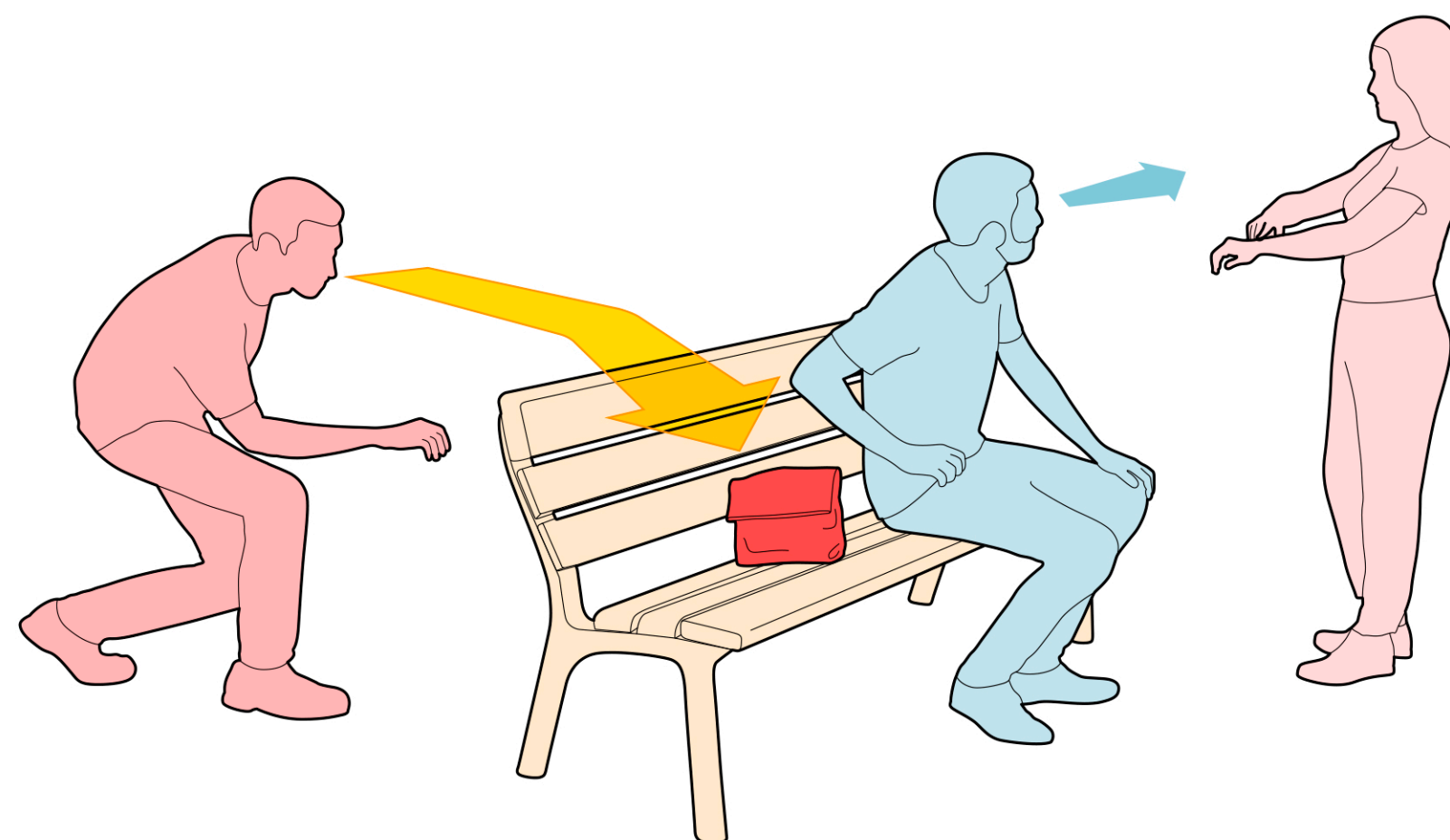
BARCELONA'S PICKPOCKETS

HOW TO AVOID THEM



THE FAKE FRIEND

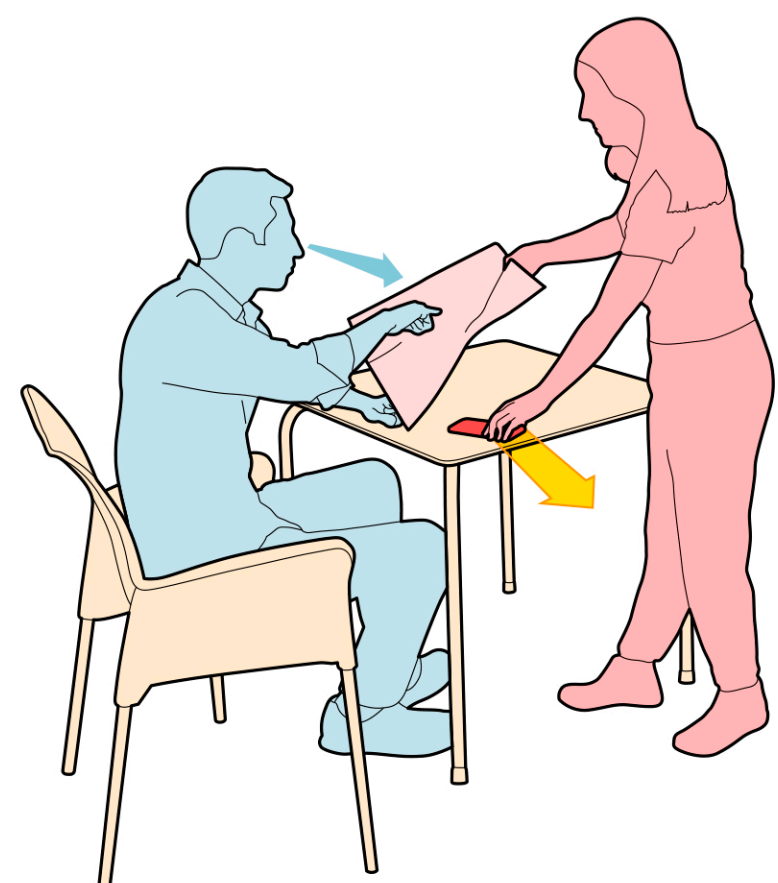
- One or more thieves hang around a spot that is popular with visitors.
- When a couple or group of tourists are about to take a photo of themselves, the thief offers to do it for them, posing as another tourist or a friendly, well-dressed citizen.
- The thief, normally aided by someone else, runs off with the mobile phone or camera.



THE BICYCLE SNATCH

- The thief, on a bicycle, positions themselves on a road where they can flee at high speed.
- They look for a victim speaking on, or otherwise using, their mobile phone at the edge of the pavement, or somewhere else they can pass at speed.
- The thief sets off, riding past their victim as close as possible and snatching their phone without slowing down.
- They accelerate and flee at full speed, often along a route they are already familiar with.

THE 'UNDER-PAPER'



- A thief, or a pair of them, finds a target tourist or group sat on the terrace of some bar and with their phones on the table.
- Whilst one keeps watch, the other approaches the targets with a map or a sheet of paper.
- The thief places the paper so the tourists can't see the phone and distracts them by asking insistently for directions or cash or whatever.
- While one hand holds the paper or map, they use the other to take the phone and pocket it.
- Once they have the directions, or whatever they were asking for, they leave as if nothing had happened.

THE DISTRACTION

- A pair or a group of thieves spot one or more distracted tourists sitting on a bench, with a bag or some other item which they're not watching closely.
- One or more of the thieves approaches the tourists from the front and distracts them with some request.
- From behind, another of the thieves reaches out and takes the object or bag.

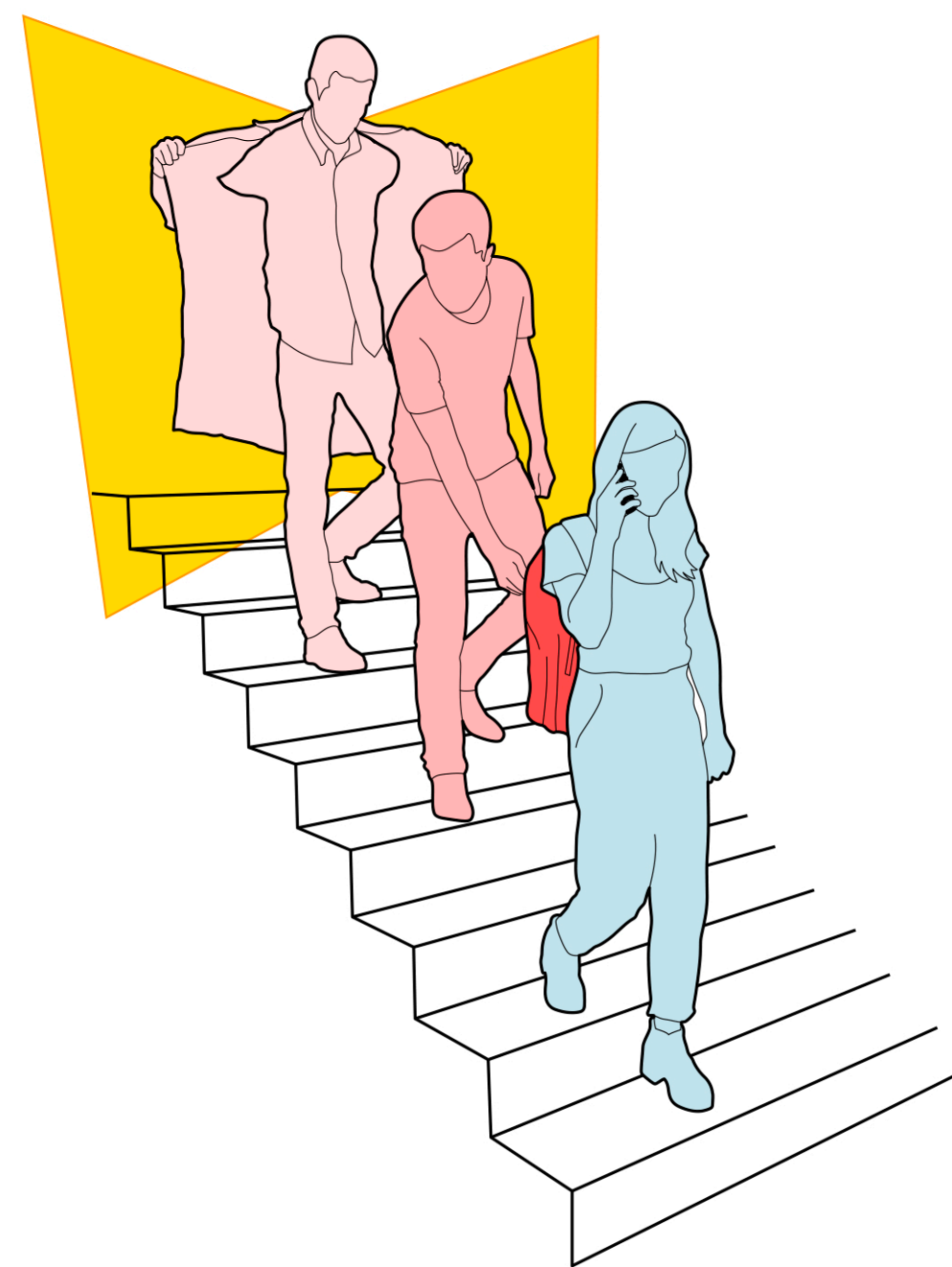
THE SHOP THIEF



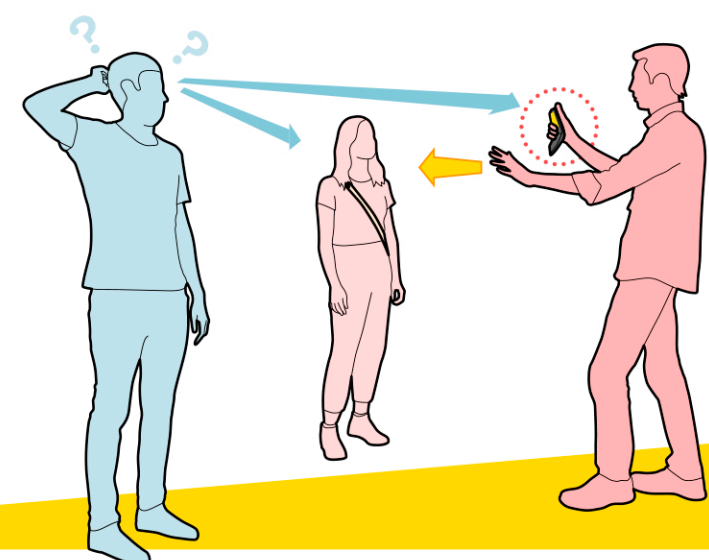
- One or more well-dressed thieves go into a busy shop or franchise of a large chain posing as shoppers.
- They spot someone who, while browsing, has put down their bag or some personal item on the floor.
- Instead of stealing from the shop, the thief takes advantage of the shopper's distraction to make off with their bag or other personal item.

THE SCREEN

- No fewer than two thieves are involved.
- They look for someone carrying a rucksack on their back at the entrance to a metro station.
- The two thieves get into position, in line behind their target.
- The second of them raises their jacket, as if they were putting it on or taking it off, to block the view of other passers-by.
- The first one, between the victim and the screen, takes advantage of this cover to put their hand into the victim's bag, discretely, to steal any valuable objects.



FAKE POLICE OFFICERS



1. Trust

- The thieves pick one or more tourists as targets, normally in quiet streets where the shops are already closed or closing.
- One or more individuals act as bait, setting themselves around the targets pretending to be tourists or locals.
- Some other crooks arrive and, posing as police officers (they flash fake badges), ask for the wallets or bags of the bait, supposedly to check their IDs and search them.

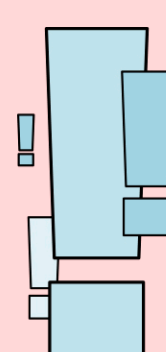
2. Example

- The decoys happily hand over their wallets and bags to the fake police officers, winning the trust of the mark.
- The fake police also ask for the targets' wallets and bags. Some pretend to check them but empty them instead, while another might distract the tourists by asking them questions.

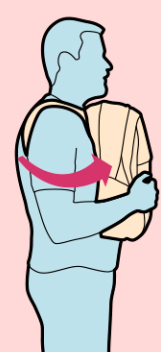
3. Emptying

- Whilst pretending to check the ID and personal effects, the thieves steal everything they can.
- When they give back the wallets and bags, they've already emptied them of any money and valuable items they might have contained.

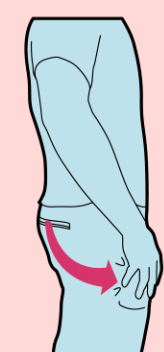
SECURITY ADVICE



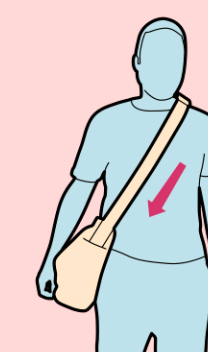
Thieves wait for people to become distracted, so stay vigilant, especially when it seems someone is trying to distract you.



If you are carrying a wallet or valuable items in your rucksack, it's best to wear it on your front where you can see it, not on your back.



Wallets should be carried in your front trouser pocket, rather than in the hip pocket.



Bags should be worn over your chest so that the bag is on the side furthest from the road.

IF YOU ARE ROBBED...

REPORT IT

As soon as you discover the crime: whether it's just happened, or it took place hours or days ago.

WHERE

You can report it to any police station or at your hotel. There is an agreement between the Mossos d'Esquadra (Catalan police) and the Hotels Union.

IF YOU REPORT IT...

The police will be able to investigate and this will make any insurance claim easier.

WITNESSES

If someone witnessed what happened, ask for their telephone number so the police can get in touch with them.

CREDIT CARDS

Remember to cancel your credit cards as soon as possible.