

Car Window Smashed at YMCA: Wallet, iPad, Other Items Stolen

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A Darien man returned to his car in the Darien YMCA parking lot just before 4:30 p.m. on Friday to find the rear passenger-side window had been smashed and a briefcase stolen from it with items valued at \$1,400, including his wallet.

Darien police gave this account of the matter:

The 64-year-old man parked his gray 2012 Lexus RX on the east side of the parking lot at 3:05 p.m. Surveillance video showed that at 4:07 p.m., two black males got out of a Honda Odyssey with a license plate that appeared to be from Florida. One suspect wore a gray hoodie, black shorts and black sneakers; the other, a green shirt.

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The brown leather briefcase taken from the car contained a wallet, credit cards and identification. Also taken from the car: an umbrella and an iPad Air.

The iPad was later found by Darien police officers by the side of the northbound entrance ramp at the Interstate 95 Exit 16 interchange. The device was damaged, and it appeared that it had been thrown there by the thief or thieves.

No other cars at the YMCA parking lot at 2420 Post Road were damaged or, it appeared, even entered. Darien police detectives are continuing to investigate the incident.

The incident resembles thefts committed by the Florida-based Felony Lane Gang, which has struck in Darien before (including at the YMCA parking lot), often with multiple thefts after windows have been smashed.

Darien police detectives regularly look into that possibility when thieves steal in ways that gang normally does, said police Capt. Donald Anderson, a spokesman for the Police Department.

The Felony Lane Gang commonly targets parking lots for fitness clubs and parks where cars may be left unattended for a while. When purses that may contain checkbooks are stolen, associates of the thieves often try to cash the checks at drive-thru windows, using the far right "felony lane" to make it harder for the tellers to see them.

How to Avoid Being Victimized This Way

In the past, police have said that one way of making this kind of theft much less likely to happen is to avoid leaving precious-looking items visible in a vehicle when it's parked.

In at least one case, police have said, gang members saw someone put a purse in a trunk in the parking lot, and that car was burglarized, the purse taken.