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Police: License Plate Leads to Man, 35, Who Fled Cop in Heavily Damaged Car

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A 35-year-old man was in Darien driving a car so heavily damaged in front that it didn't have any working front headlights, and when a police officer tried to get him to pull over, the man raced onto the highway, police said.

Darien police described what happened with this further account, including accusations not proven in court:

Benjamin Nieves Jr. of Smith Street in Bridgeport was driving on Heights Road at 10:10 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 11 when a police officer on patrol spotted the black 2003 Chevrolet Cavalier.

The officer followed the car onto Noroton Avenue and then to Hecker Avenue, where the patrol car's lights and siren were turned on in an unsuccessful attempt to pull over the Cavalier.

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Instead, Nieves sped up, passed other vehicles by using the oncoming-traffic lane and got onto the Interstate 95 entrance. The officer, who by this time had the vehicle's license plate number, followed the car onto the highway, but a decision was made to stop the pursuit in the interest of safety.

The license plate number led state records that got police an address on Smith Street in Bridgeport, which is where they found the car and, eventually, the owner.

Nieves first told police that the car couldn't even be driven because the fuel pump was broken, so it couldn't be the one they were looking for. He later came to police headquarters with security camera recordings showing the car parked in his driveway

The police officer said the car was the one he had tried to stop. The car also seemed to be in different spots in the driveway at different times in the pictures. Nieves said he had pushed it around the driveway in order to get into the garage.

Then Nieves said a friend of his may have taken the car, and he made contact with him. Police spoke with the friend, who at first said he did have the car but wasn't in Darien. After more questioning, the man told police that in fact he didn't have the car and that he only said he did because he was just trying to help Nieves.

Police charged Nieves with disobeying the signal of a police officer, reckless driving and failure to have headlights on. He was released on \$15,000 bond and is scheduled to appear Jan. 23 in state Superior Court in Stamford.

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