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Area Police Chief: Revolving-Door Legal System Contributes to Spate of Car Thefts

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The Waterbury gang members stealing unlocked motor vehicles from outside homes in Darien, New Canaan and other area communities often have been arrested multiple times in the past, according to New Canaan Police Chief Leon Krolikowski.

Krolikowski's comments came a few days before Darien Police Department posted an alert Saturday [on Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) that three more cars were stolen overnight in town.

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Those arrested are nearly always juveniles — some as young as 14 years old. One girl arrested in connection with the thefts in New Canaan had been charged with 53 felonies “and she was not even held, she was released,” Krolikowski told members of the New Canaan Police Commission last week.

“The justice system lets them get arrested multiple times,” he said at the Nov. 15 meeting. “That is part of the problem with the system.”

— A version of [this article](#) previously was published by *NewCanaanite.com*.

The comments came about one week after New Canaan residents reported [multiple thefts of vehicles](#) from their homes. Darien has a similar pattern of car thefts, as do many other towns in the area.

In all cases, cars were unlocked with their keys inside — a curious practice that has persisted for years among many area residents despite multiple warnings from police through local news outlets, police departments' social media tools.

"We tell people to stop leaving your bird feeders out so the bears don't come," the police chief said. "Let's stop doing this so they don't come."

What They Commonly Do

The thieves are not seeking to steal and sell off the motor vehicles, Krolikowski said. “There is no economic incentive for them.”

Rather, “they are joyriding, pretty much,” he said.

The juveniles steal cars from New Canaan, dump them in Waterbury and then “go back out again to steal more cars,” the police chief said.

“It's fun for them," Krolikowski said. "They drive 100 mph sometimes when we are involved in pursuits. There's a recklessness to it that is concerning."

The Problem Is Growing

New Canaan has seen thefts of cars from town more than double in 2017 compared to 2016, Krolikowski said. Thefts from motor vehicles also are up year-over-year, from 31 to 36, he said, and the two are connected.

The Waterbury juveniles “keep replicating and coming back” to the area, he said.

“They have stolen over 100 vehicles in Fairfield County. We had a big meeting the other day with all the chiefs and command staff trying to develop a strategy.”

Krolikowski said he and others in this part of the state are eager to see the Waterbury Police Department chief get involved, too. He added that Greenwich, Darien and other towns have seen multiple thefts of cars.

“Everyone in the area has been hit,” Krolikowski said, “so we are not alone by any means.”

Recent Articles on Motor Vehicle Thefts

- [Darien Police Have Some Tips on Preventing Motor Vehicle Burglaries and Thefts](#) (Nov. 15)
- [Unlocked Cars Stolen in Northern Darien, New Canaan Over Weekend](#) (Nov. 6)
- [Police: On a Dead-End Street in Darien, Driving a Stolen Car from Stamford: Two Teens from Bridgeport](#) (Aug. 23)
- [Another Vehicle Stolen from Out-of-the-Way Rocaton Road](#) (Aug. 22)
- [Unlocked Vehicle Stolen from Driveway on Mansfield Avenue](#) (June 6)
- [Stolen SUV Found at Darien Gas Station](#) (March 9)
- [Police Chief on Recent Car Burglary Spree: 2 Arrests Helped, Other Towns Getting Similar Burglaries](#) (March 2)