

Keep up Your Registration, Insurance — or the License Plate Reader Could Get You

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Darien police say that on Sunday an officer stopped an SUV with suspended registration driven by the owner's son, 19, who didn't have his learner's permit with him but did have marijuana in his car.

Police described the incident with this account (including accusations not proven in court):

At 1:42 a.m., a police officer on a holiday roaming patrol on Middlesex Road was alerted by the license plate reader on the patrol car, indicating that a Toyota Sequoia on the road nearby didn't have current insurance.

The officer stopped the SUV on Middlesex Road near its intersection with Colony Road. The driver, a 19-year-old Stamford man, said he was driving his father's vehicle and didn't have his learner's permit with him. He also couldn't find the car's registration or insurance card. He said he was going to visit his girlfriend in Darien.

The officer contacted the driver's father, who said he couldn't bring his son's learner's permit to the scene. An inventory of the car revealed a large clear prescription bottle in the pocket in the back of the front passenger seat. Inside it was a marijuana cigarette with 2.0 grams of pot in it.

In these circumstances, department policy is to take the driver into custody, so the Stamford man was taken to Darien Police Headquarters and charged with driving a vehicle with suspended registration, driving with a learner's permit but without an instructor present and possession of less than half an ounce of marijuana.

Later, the man's father arrived at Police Headquarters with his son's learner's permit and birth certificate. The

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teenager, who did not have a criminal record, was released on a promise to appear Jan. 6 in state Superior Court in Stamford.