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Police: Aroused by Strangers After Passing Out Behind Wheel of Her Running Car, Woman Drives Into Light Pole

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A 33-year-old woman with a child in her car was found behind the wheel, passed out at the intersection of [Tokeneke Road and Old Farm Road](#), police said.

When she was aroused by witnesses, she immediately drove the SUV she was driving into a light pole, toppling it, police said. Police did not report that the woman, the child in the car or anyone else was injured in the incident, which happened just before police were called at 2:24 a.m. on Saturday, July 22, police said.

Darien police gave this further account of the incident, including accusations not proven in court:

When police arrived at the scene, they saw the driver, Zaida Gomez-Mendez of Norwalk, outside a 2007 Honda CRV, speaking to the child in the back seat.

When police asked Gomez-Mendez what happened. She said, "Nothing."

An officer then asked her if she had struck the pole. She replied, "Nothing."

Officers could smell an alcoholic drink on her breath. They asked her to take field sobriety tests. She couldn't perform them adequately and was charged with driving while under the influence. Both she and the child were taken to Police Headquarters.

At headquarters, Gomez-Mendez refused to take a breath test. That can result in the Department of Motor Vehicles imposing a longer driving suspension on a defendant.

During the arrest process, she said she had been drinking at a friend's house, and told police she made a "big mistake."

Along with driving while under the influence, the woman was charged with risk of injury to a minor (a felony) and unsafe backing.

Gomez-Mendez was released on a \$250 bond, was told her driving privileges were suspended for 24 hours and was told to appear Aug. 1 in state Superior Court in Stamford.