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News for Darien

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Police: Thousands of Dollars Stolen from Checks in a Mailbox — on a Shoestring Budget

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A man and two teenage boys, all from Yonkers, were arrested after they stole envelopes from a mailbox at the Darien Post Office on Saturday, police said.

Also, a check was found to have been altered after it had been mailed at the same place on the previous Tuesday, police said.

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

Two Checks Altered for a Total of \$2,343

On Tuesday, Oct. 23, a man later told police, he had mailed six checks by putting the envelopes in a mailbox at the Post Office on Corbin Drive. His bank later informed him that some of the checks had possibly been cashed fraudulently.

One of the checks, for \$800, had been altered and made out to a person he didn't know. A second check, for \$2,343, was also altered and made out to a "Renado Moss," someone the victim also didn't know.

On Corbin Drive

On Friday, at about 1:02 a.m., a police officer patrolling on Corbin Drive noticed a male in dark clothing walking on the north side of Corbin Road (the side where the gas station is located) and dressed in dark clothing.

Because of nighttime motor vehicle burglaries in town, the officer took note of the pedestrian. The pedestrian also appeared to have taken notice of the passing patrol car and immediately turned around and started walking in the opposite direction.

That was suspicious enough that the officer stopped, got out of the patrol car and talked with the male, who turned out to be a 15-year-old teenager. More suspicious still: The male appeared to be very nervous when he was asked some "basic questions."

In answering the officer's questions, the teenager said he was meeting someone in the area.

Second Teenager

More police officers were called to the area. One of them saw a male leaving the wooded area behind the Post Office at 30 Corbin Drive.

This officer confronted the male, a 17-year-old teenager. The boy denied knowing the 15-year-old.

As the two spoke, the officer noticed an envelope sticking out of the teen's jacket pocket and asked about it. The teenager admitted that the mail didn't belong to him.

Police checked the envelope, which had postage but no postage mark indicating that it had been processed.

Each of the teenagers told police they were from New York state. Police detained them.

Building Better With Mousetrap Glue

Police checked the area near the mailboxes at the Post Office and found many pieces of ripped-up mail on the ground.

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Hanging from one of the mailbox openings was a shoestring. Attached to the shoestring was a beverage bottle covered with a sticky substance that police later found was mousetrap glue.

Police said that kind of device is commonly used in mail theft cases. Police pulled on the shoestring, and retrieved the bottle with several pieces of mail stuck to it.

More Suspicious Behavior

As police spoke with the teenagers, an officer saw a dark sedan with New York license plates slowly pass by their location. That was suspicious enough for police to stop the car.

The driver turned out to be Renado Moss, 29, also of Yonkers. (It wasn't until hours later on Saturday, at 10:16 a.m., that the victim of the altered checks would contact police about the fraud in which Moss's name was added to a check.)

Police suspicions mounted when an officer saw a yellow plastic bag in plain view in the car. It was full of opened mail.

Police searched the car, finding 31 opened envelopes, none of them addressed to Moss, six shoe laces (identical to the one that was part of the mail-theft device) and a debit card with someone else's name on it.

Moss admitted that he drove the two teenagers to Darien and they had brought the mail to his car after they'd taken it from the mailbox.

Arrests

Police arrested all three of them. Before taking the teenagers to Police Headquarters, police found several pieces of mail (all without cancellation marks, most with a sticky residue on them) on the 17-year-old found leaving the Post Office property. An altered check with the name of a Darien resident was in his jacket pocket.

On the 15-year-old who was stopped on Corbin Drive, police found a TDBank debit card in someone else's name.

The three were each charged with sixth-degree larceny, possession of burglary tools, criminal conspiracy to commit sixth-degree larceny and second-degree criminal trespass. Moss was also charged with risk of injury to a minor, a felony.

The two teenagers were released to members of their families and are scheduled to appear Nov. 6 in Juvenile Court in Stamford.

Moss was held on a \$5,000 bond he was unable to post, and he appeared later that day in state Superior Court

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in Stamford. His bond has been increased to \$10,000, and the Connecticut Judicial Branch website on Tuesday morning says that he hasn't been released. His next court date is Nov. 19.

(Police said Moss' address was on a "Van Courtland Parkway" in Yonkers. That name didn't come up on a Google search, but a "Van Cortlandt Park Avenue" did.)

The United States Postal Inspector's Office was notified and is assisting with the investigation.

According to the [U.S. Postal Inspection Service](#):

- Mailboxes are considered federal property, and federal law (Title 18, United States Code, Section 1705), makes it a crime to vandalize them (or to injure, deface or destroy any mail deposited in them). Violators can be fined up to \$250,000, or imprisoned for up to three years, for each act of vandalism.