



WESTFIELD POLICE DEPARTMENT

Honor, Integrity, Pride.

- An Accredited Law Enforcement Agency
& Public Safety Answering and Dispatch Point -

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WESTFIELD POLICE ARREST 17-YEAR-OLD MALE FOLLOWING AFTERNOON PURSUIT OF STOLEN VEHICLE, CRASH, FOOT CHASE

WESTFIELD – DECEMBER 30, 2022 – A 17-year-old male from Plainfield driving a vehicle that was just reported stolen minutes earlier was arrested by Westfield Police yesterday afternoon following a pursuit that ended in a crash and foot chase with officers.

According to Westfield Police Chief Christopher Battiloro, Officer Ryan Weiss observed the stolen vehicle, a 2014 Audi Q5, at approximately 2:07 PM on Lamberts Mill Road approaching the intersection of Rahway Avenue. It was stolen at approximately 1:47 PM from in front of an auto repair shop on the 1600 block of W. 2nd Street in Plainfield, where it was left running unattended in the street with its key fob in it.

Westfield Police were informed of the vehicle's theft following the dispatcher's receipt of a county-wide alarm transmitted via radio by Plainfield Police, which was then re-transmitted by the dispatcher to all Westfield officers in the field.

The driver of the stolen vehicle, who was wearing a ski mask, immediately attempted to flee by making an unlawful left turn from the right lane of travel and then accelerating at a very high rate of speed. Officer Weiss pursued the vehicle north on Rahway Avenue, and then north on W. Broad Street, at which time the vehicle's driver crashed into another vehicle, a 2018 Toyota 4-Runner, traveling in the opposite direction. The driver and sole occupant of the stolen vehicle immediately fled on foot from the scene of the crash.

Officer Weiss chased the driver on foot to the 600 block on W. South Avenue, where he was taken into custody near the intersection of Downer Street with the assistance of Officers Michael McCarthy and Joseph Natale. He was observed discarding a controlled dangerous substance (suspected crack cocaine) while fleeing.

Both vehicles sustained disabling damage as a result of the crash. and the other vehicle's driver, an 18-year-old female from Westfield, sustained facial lacerations and other non-life-threatening injuries. She was treated at the scene by the Westfield Fire Department, subsequently transported to University Hospital in Newark by Union County Emergency Medical Services, and has since been released.



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The 17-year-old male was served with juvenile delinquency complaints charging the following, all of which were approved by the Union Country Prosecutor's Office:

- Resisting Arrest; Eluding Officer, 2C:29-2b, a crime of the second degree;
- Obstructing Administration of Law or Other Governmental Function, 2C:29-1b, a crime of the fourth degree;
- Hindering Apprehension, 2C:29-3a(3), a crime of the third degree;
- Possession of a Controlled Dangerous Substance (suspected crack cocaine), 2C:35-10a(1), a crime of the third degree;
- Receiving Stolen Property, 2C:20-7a, a crime of the third degree;
- Assault by Auto, 2C:12-1c(1), a crime of the fourth degree.

Following arrest processing at the Westfield Police Department, he was remanded to the Essex County Juvenile Detention Center in Newark.

Chief Battiloro has repeatedly stated that vehicle theft remains one of New Jersey's most pressing criminal problems. There have been 16,085 vehicles reported stolen statewide through Wednesday, December 28, 2022 – an average of 44 per day – and an 11% increase year to-date vs. 2021.

“Persons who carelessly leave vehicles unlocked with their key fobs in them are contributing greatly to the ease with which vehicles are stolen,” stated Chief Battiloro. “And, as this incident so very clearly demonstrates, such actions put not just our officers, but innocent persons, in great danger,” he added.

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