



Phone snatch victim gives chase – and gets it back Free 241224

Description



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Izzy Du was walking along a busy main road in north London around mid-morning when the phone was taken from her hand by two people on a bicycle.

Ms Du gave chase and apprehended one of them, until the police arrived. She then used her phone tracker to locate her phone, which she found hidden in a hedge along with six other mobile phones.

The Metropolitan Police has said it is “committed” to tackling the issue of phone theft.

Ms Du said many of her friends had previously had phones snatched but this was the first time it had happened to her.

At the time she was carrying a heavy bag in one hand and as she was changing the music on her phone in her other hand, she was targeted.

She told BBC London: “My heart dropped and I was like no, no, no, no.

“It’s just horrible, it’s the worst feeling when this actually happens to you.”

Ms Du said that the phone was a vital part of her work as a designer.

“Your whole life is on your phone – it couldn’t have been worse timing because of everything going on with my work that day,” she said.

Ms Du described how she ran for “nearly 2km”.

“I’ve been training lately, so I can run,” Ms Du said.

“I’m running and running and shouting after them that I need my phone,” she explained.

She was able to watch the pair in the distance as they stopped the bicycle and handed the phone to a third party.

Ms Du said it was at this point one of the youths stepped off the bike and she was able to chase him on foot.

She said when she finally caught up with the youth, she was able to restrain him, while members of the public nearby called the police.

Once the police arrived, the suspect was arrested and Ms Du was taken home to provide a statement.

Straight after she said she opened her laptop, and could see her phone on her tracker.

She asked the police to help her hunt for the phone, but said “they did nothing” claiming they “gave

every excuse” not to go and look for the phone.

Once Ms Du had provided her statement she went back to the scene without police assistance.

She, along with a member of the public who saw the incident unfold, began searching for the phone using the in-built tracker.

The pair found the phone stashed inside a plastic bag in a hedge along with six other mobile phones.

Ms Du said she was “shocked” to be able to find her phone and was pleased to be able to return three of the mobiles to people whose phones were also taken.

She had seen these three people as she gave chase as they called out to her, saying they had been targeted too.

The other three phones were handed to police.

Reflecting on the incident, Ms Du said she was “disappointed” with the police response and said that if they decided to go to the location shown on the online tracker, “they would have found the phone”.

Metropolitan Police figures show 72,936 mobile phones were stolen from January 2024 to November 2024.

It is not known how many of these thefts result in prosecution, but the Met Police said that 750 phones were recovered in the first six months of 2024.

‘Invasive crime’

In a statement the Metropolitan Police said a 16-year-old male had been arrested and charged with theft in connection to the incident.

The force said that work continues to identify the other person involved and has asked any witnesses to come forward.

Cdr Owain Richards said: “We understand the impact that mobile phone theft can have on victims – it’s an invasive and sometimes violent crime – and we’re committed to protecting Londoners and tackling this issue as we make the capital safer.

“Met officers are targeting resources to hotspot areas with increased patrols, including utilising plain clothes officers,” he added.

Cdr Richards said the Met does use data and technology to track stolen mobiles, and said the force encourages people to report thefts “as soon as they can”, so police can “investigate swiftly”.

Mobile phone fraud protection tips

The Met Police has the following advice:

- Activate device security features including 'Find My Phone' and stolen device protection in 'settings'
- Have a strong password and two-factor authentication
- Turn off message previews so thieves cannot see any messages about reset or log in codes when phones are locked
- Write down and safely store the phone's IMEI number. This can be found by dialling *#06# from an unlocked device.
- If the phone is lost or stolen notify Apple or Google via their device finding services.

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