



Specialised
Security Services



PROJECT : THEFT

HIJACKING OF VEHICLES WITH CARGO/THEFT OF CARGO





Hijackers are raising the stakes, aiming to kill two birds with one stone when they target a vehicle carrying valuable cargo thereby increasing the booty.

Pretoria's bird PI, renowned for his private collection of pink flamingos and other stork varieties, as well as the rescue of almost 2 000 Flamingo-chicks at Kamfers Dam, Kimberley, was contacted at the height of the city's heatwave when almost 200 exotic birds were hijacked. Mr. Mike Bolhuis immediately reacted by assigning Mr. Luke Enslin, Mr. Tony Naidoo and Mr. Cecil Benade to the case.

After extensive track and tracing the route of the stolen bakkie was established. The stolen bakkie was retrieved earlier on in the investigation after the tracking company informed the SAPS of its location when the hijackers left it behind. But their route from the starting point to the place where the perpetrators took the canopy off, enabled our investigators to infiltrate the immediate informant's network. To the team's advantage, they could make use of the existing and extensive network within the Soweto-area.

A strategic decision had to be made: 1. an immediate raid even though the birds haven't been retrieved; or 2. play along, buy as many birds as is possible and then only act. At this stage, the birds were dropped off and being sold as and when. From this, it was evident that the perpetrators were after the brand new bakkie only, for they were selling the birds off at only R100.00 a piece to get rid of them. These birds priced up to R4 000.00 and were destined for the international market.

The decision was made to first try and recover as many birds as possible. The extreme heat was an excruciating fact and had a huge influence on the investigation as such. The

fear that the young birds might dehydrate and die was a continuous reminder to the team. It was therefore decided that the birds will be bought back and only then will the culprits be apprehended. Now 81 African Greys were recouped and 7 out of the 8 Amazons. The one Cockatoo remains missing with the other birds.

Exotic Birds are in big demand and cost a lot of money thus theft of such birds is on the rise. In this specific case, our main objective was to retrieve the birds before any action could be taken to apprehend the suspects involved. The reason being was if we arrested the suspects 1st there was a strong possibility that they would have killed the birds, or the delay in us getting to the birds would have caused their ultimate death. Due to these reasons, it is of vital importance that the correct people are contacted immediately so that they know how to act to ensure the safe retrieval of such exotic birds. It is important to realize that the birds were kidnapped and taken hostage for a ransom to be paid. And the original motive was to steal a new bakkie.

PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES WHEN YOU ARE TRANSPORTING VALUABLES.

- Please be aware of who you share any information with when transporting the valuable item.
 - Keep the cargo out of plain sight/cover it inconspicuously.
 - Do not travel with branded vehicles. These vehicles are branded for their high profile purpose.
 - Ensure that the vehicles and cellphones have proper track and trace technology.
 - Work with reliable/trustworthy staff.
 - When there is suspicion of any possible foul play always arrange armed escorts with reputable security companies.
 - In the event of theft, always contact the necessary "Whats App" Groups to make such incidents known immediately. This enables the information to spread quickly.
 - Always take your own safety seriously.
 - Never drive late at night on deserted roads.
 - Do not stop in dimly lit alleys.
 - Try to avoid driving alone/by yourself late at night.
 - Do not stop for hitchhikers or any odd, stray police vehicle.
 - If it is not an official-looking roadblock, put your hazards on and drive to the nearest public area, where there is CCTV-footage most probably or eyewitnesses.
 - We have recently learned and we receive more and more such cases, that the majority of cases are not opened because the perpetrators, whether they are civilians or police officers, take not only what is in the vehicles, but they also take photographs of their victims, threatening them that they will return should they date to open a case.
 - They will also take house keys and all other personal belongings as proof that they will return if they are handed over to the authorities.
 - Transporters should try and avoid stopping whilst on their way to make their deliveries. However, if they have to stop, then stop at a secure and public location in plain view of as many people as possible. During the night, be even more aware of the well lit, secure known stops with CCTV-cameras for your own safety.
 - Always follow the road rules and regulations, stay within the speed limits and avoid being pulled over by the authorities.
 - If there is any obstruction placed in the road, in whatever form or manner, do not stop or even drive closely past it. Never stop to remove it. Rather turn around and call the necessary authorities and those you report to/responsible for.
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- In case of a flat tire/accident, report the incident immediately to your superiors, the authorities and the insurance.
- Do whatever is required from you, to safeguard your property.
- We receive more and more cases of trucks that get looted when the stand idling/waiting.
- We also receive several cases where people who was seriously injured in accidents/even died, were robbed of their personal belongings such as jewellery, cellphones, laptops, etc, whilst the ambulances were on their way.
- Always try to remember to audio/video record all incidents, no matter how inconsequential it might seem to you.
- The bottom line is that whilst en route, avoid any and all distractions.
- Do not stop for anything and do not stop just anywhere unless it is absolutely necessary.

I would want to advocate everyone to practice a form of semi-paranoia when driving with valuable cargo or with your family - always be well-rested, wide-awake and overtly suspicious and critical of your surroundings.

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Regards

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