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# Angry theft victim raps police no-show



FED-UP: Malcolm Austin

## EXCLUSIVE

**A PLUMBER was furious after police failed to turn up to quiz people he suspected had stolen £1,000 worth of tools from his van.**

Malcolm Austin confronted the men he believed nicked his equipment weeks earlier and managed to block in their van in the B&Q car park, Towcester Road, on February 12.

He called police but was staggered with their response.

He said: "I phoned the police and they said they weren't interested. They did not want to know. I think that's wrong when people are having their vehicles broken into. Even B&Q weren't interested. I did catch them and then they wrote my van off."

Mr Austin had spotted the same van he understood to have been involved in the theft from his vehicle parked at the diy store.

The occupants were in the process of committing another crime so he attempted to corner them.

He rang the police but the would-be thieves rammed his vehicle and escaped.

Meanwhile, he was stunned at the response of the police who, he says, did not react quickly enough.

And he says he is infuriated at the number of break-ins at the store - from where his own vehicle was raided.

Mr Austin is now warning people to be aware they park at their own risk.

He added: "B&Q staff are saying it happens every week. If that's the case why don't the police do something about it?"

A B&Q spokesperson said: "We're sorry to hear of this particular incident.

"We know that a few incidents of theft have occurred in the past in the car park of our Northampton store and as a result of this we've

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stepped up the number of guards patrolling the car park on a daily basis. We take the security of our customers and their vehicles very seriously and have CCTV in operation in the car park.

"We also have a good communication network with the local Police and work closely with them should any incidents occur. We are the landlord of this car park but our responsibility is to ensure its upkeep is maintained; as regards incidents of theft we urge any customer to take this up with their insurance company direct as soon as possible."

A police spokesperson said: "We gave this incident a grade two response. But on reflection it should have been a grade one.

"But we did carry out a number of immediate inquiries in a bid to track down the vehicle. We are now carrying out a full and thorough inquiry and we urge members of the public, for their own protection, to ring 999 in connection with crime rather than taking matters into their own hands."

Inspector Dave Rayfield, of Northants Police, added: "There have been a number of incidents at this location recently and we have stepped up patrols in a bid to catch the offenders.

"We have also held meetings with B&Q and will continue to work in partnership with the firm. Our inquiries are continuing and we will work hard to track down the offenders."

Police are looking for two males in their early thirties. The driver of the vehicle was stocky and wore a black woolly hat, the other is described as slim.

The vehicle the men were driving was white with the registration ending in BZO. Witnesses should call police on (08453) 700 700.

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