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Dozens of vehicles vandalized at Hollywood condo

March 10, 2014 | By Rebeca Piccardo, Sun Sentinel

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HOLLYWOOD — Dozens of residents at the oceanfront Trafalgar Towers condo awoke early Monday to find their parking lot littered with glass from their smashed car windows.

Police Lt. Osvaldo Perez said thieves "went from car to car, [making] forced entry, removing personal property, such as loose change, sun glasses."

Nicole Leon, 32, apparently was the first to discover the vandalism at about 5 a.m., when she saw that two windows of her Nissan Rogue were broken but nothing was missing.

"It's not how I wanted it, but I got a day off work," she said. "I could see five other vehicles right off, but now it looks like it was more than 50 cars."

As Leon began cleaning shards of glass from inside her car, she was joined by the owners of other sedans, SUVs and minivans parked in the lot along the 1400 block of South Ocean Drive.

Raquel Alves, 29, found a window of her 2005 Scion XB shattered when she showed up to take her 9-year-old son to school. Missing were a pair of sunglasses, an old cell phone and some change, she said.

Like many other residents, Alves called her insurance company in hopes of getting the broken window repaired as soon as possible.

Once police arrived, residents began alerting neighbors to could check their vehicles.

That's how Agnes Pusztai, found out her car had been vandalized.

Pusztai, a resident of the condominium for more than 13 years, said she made a habit of leaving nothing of value in her car.

"You think it's a safe place," said Pusztai. "It was shocking for everybody."

For Robert Zandtte, who splits his time between Toronto, Canada, and South Florida, the incident was especially surprising because the parking lot is in plain sight.

"This lot is facing the A1A," said Zandtte. "You think somebody would have seen it."

After learning about the break-ins, Zandtte went outside to find his 2014 Lexus ES 350 with two damaged windows.

"I feel violated," said Zandtte. "It's like someone broke into my home."

Perez said he did not know if detectives had any suspects.

But the police union, waging a campaign to oust police chief Frank Fernandez, seized on the incident as evidence that crime was rampant in Hollywood.

"I am not saying this is something that can't happen anywhere else," said union president Jeff Marano, "but it is ironic it happens as we start a campaign to make the public more aware that Frank Fernandez is more interested in grandstanding than in the basic functions of police to fight crime."

rpiccardo@tribune.com, 954-356-4544 or Twitter @rpicc002

Prevention tips:

Remove visible items from your vehicle.

Lock your car, make sure all windows are closed.

Use your car alarm

Park in a well-lit areas

Source: Wilton Manors Police Department

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