



RATT Tales

Auto Theft Newsletter

Stolen U.S. Cars
Shipped to Foreign
Countries

Story on page 2

Produced by the San Diego County Regional Auto Theft Task Force—RATT 1(888) TELL-RAT

MOTORCYCLE THIEVES ON NOTICE

New California Law Makes Possession of a “Pigtail” Illegal

Law enforcement agencies across California now have the ability to crack down on crooks who were taking advantage of a loophole in the law to steal thousands of sport motorcycles every year.

Professional motorcycle thieves use a device, known as a “pigtail,” to bypass the factory-installed ignition on these bikes. Using common hardware like electrical tape, wire strippers, and an Allen wrench, the culprits design the pigtail to work like an altered motorcycle ignition, which allows them to steal a bike in less than 20 seconds.



Homemade pigtails

All that changed on January 1st, 2011, thanks to the introduction of California Penal Code Section 466.65. The new law creates a parallel offense which makes it a misdemeanor to possess specified tools with the intent to unlawfully take or drive a motorcycle. Violators face up to six months in jail and fines up to \$1,000.

“This law will greatly assist police agencies throughout the state which have been working diligently to target professional motorcycle thieves for years. This is the tool we’ve been waiting for that will give law enforcement the edge against these criminals,” said California Highway Patrol Captain Scott Parker, who is also the commanding officer for the San Diego Regional Auto Theft Task Force, also known as RATT.

News Conference 12-28-2010 - podium: Chief Adolfo **Gonzales** NCPD, from right to left: California State Assemblyman -74th District Martin **Garrick**, Officer Anthony **Molina** CVPD, Captain Scott **Parker** CHP/RATT, Chief Dave **Bejarano** CVPD, Businessman Mike **Ramos**

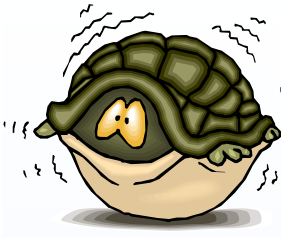
Thieves Target Cadillac’s Third-Row Seats

Car burglars have been targeting SUVs made by General Motors, which include the Chevy, Cadillac, and GMC. Many of these vehicles include an optional third-row seat that takes just a few seconds to remove and has a black-market resale value that can top \$1,500.

Crime Prevention Tip: Consider investing a few dollars toward the purchase of a reinforced cable lock. By securing the third-row seat to the body of your car you will make it more difficult for a thief to remove and hopefully less desirable to steal. Or, if you do not use your third-row seat, consider removing the seat and storing it in your garage.



Use a heavy-duty reinforced lock & cable to secure the seat



A little **F.E.A.R.** is good!

They say that having a little fear in your life can be a good thing. It can keep you safe by warning you of pending danger or from doing those really dumb things that your parents warned you about when you were a kid. Even as adults we are told that we need to face fear in order to overcome it. But if you steal cars for a living in California then facing fear is probably the last thing that you would ever want to do.

In 1994, Senate Bill 1743, the Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Act, required insurance companies, doing business in California, to pay an annual fee of \$1 for each auto insurance policy they write in this state. The legislation requires the portion of the collected fees be used to fund “increased investigation and prosecution of economic vehicle theft.” The money is also to be used to interdict stolen vehicles and vehicle component parts from being exported across international borders.

In response to this legislation, the California Highway Patrol established the **F**oreign **E**xport **A**nd **R**ecovery program, otherwise known as FEAR. The primary goal of FEAR is to identify organized vehicle theft export rings operating throughout California. FEAR investigators are divided into two teams covering both the northern and southern portions of the state. The FEAR South team covers California’s six, U.S. – Mexico International land borders, three seaports and the Los Angeles International Air cargo export site.

Once an individual or an organized car theft ring is identified, FEAR auto theft detectives conduct an investigation, make arrests and then coordinate with the local District Attorney’s Office in order to seek criminal prosecution. These law enforcement professionals work with criminal prosecutors to ensure that thieves, attempting to export stolen cars, are brought to justice.

According to Sergeant Michael Stefanoff, supervisor for the FEAR South team, “We are continually working to establish, build and maintain strong relationships with, not just federal, state and local law enforcement agencies, but with all governmental agencies and the private industry involved with the legitimate export of vehicles.”

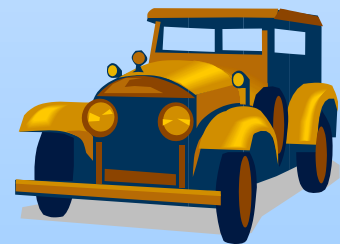
FEAR investigators also provide ongoing support, assistance and training to auto theft detectives from the various law enforcement agencies Stefanoff added.

***** [A message from FEAR](#) *****

The president of a local car club was recently overheard telling someone that he was not concerned about his antique car ever being stolen since it’s always stored in a locked garage, it’s transported on a vehicle trailer and, when his car is out in public, it was never left unattended.

Please consider the following!

In June of 2010, a 1965 Mustang Convertible that had been reported stolen back in 1999 was seized at the Long Beach Seaport by U.S. Custom’s and Border Protection and recovered by **FEAR**. The car was scheduled to be exported to New Zealand.



Less than four months later, **FEAR** intercepted and recovered a 1959 Corvette that had not yet been reported stolen. The VET was slated for export out of the country to an unknown destination.

Stolen date:

- 2-11-11 1955 Chevy 3100 P/U
- 1-30-11 1932 Ford Roadster
- 1-16-11 1971 Porsche 911
- 1-02-11 1934 Ford Coup

For a listing of other stolen antique/classic cars please visit: www.wsati.org/stolenclassics.html

Keyless-Entry Cars Vulnerable to Silent Theft

Swiss researchers find holes in the keyless systems from eight car manufacturers

By Colin Bird
Cars. Com

Remote keyless entry has been around for a while – since the late 1980s, in fact – and today it’s almost standard on all new cars. But the pervasiveness of this feature is not without consequence. As researchers in Switzerland point out, the technology can make vehicle theft a breeze for a savvy thief.

Remote keyless-entry systems use radio waves that typically are specific to a manufacturer, and the signals are usually encrypted. When your vehicle’s key fob is within 20 feet of the car, you’re allowed to transmit a signal to unlock the doors, pop the trunk, remote start your car (when equipped) or activate the car alarm.

Researchers at ETH Zurich discovered that these encrypted signals are easy to intercept and trick. The theft works by setting up two antennas, one near the targeted vehicle and one near the holder of the key fob — be it in a purse, bag or pocket. This equipment can usually be purchased for \$100 to \$1,000. The person with the antenna aimed at the owner of the key fob needs to get within 26 feet of the target. In a store, this could be a few aisles away, so as to not arouse suspicion.

Once the antenna is near the intended victim’s key fob, the key transmits a low-power signal to the antenna, which is then relayed to the antenna near the vehicle. Once that occurs, the thief can unlock the doors and drive away (if the vehicle has push-button start).

The Swiss researchers hacked into eight car manufacturers’ passive-entry systems using this method. No cryptology or protocol could stop it.

While this system may seem fairly complicated, it could catch on with car thieves because of the cost of the equipment and anonymity. However, the hackers cannot start the cars with traditional keys. Today’s ignition systems are increasingly complicated and secure. That’s one reason why car thefts are largely on the decline in the U.S.



David Wagner, a computer science professor at the University of California at Berkeley, said there are probably easier ways to steal cars, but the “nasty aspect of high-tech car theft” is that it doesn’t leave any sign of forced entry. That could lead to problems with police and insurance companies in tracking down the criminals or with filing claims.

Right now, the only way to protect yourself is by either shielding your key fob’s radio with a guard or leaving your key fob at home. Srdjan Capkun, an assistant professor at ETH Zurich, says the institute is working on a way to prevent this sort of theft.

Read more: <http://blogs.cars.com/kickingtires/2011/01/keyless-entry-cars-vulnerable-to-silent-theft.html#ixzz1E8wWfqXO>



2010

The top 10 lists of stolen cars and motorcycles were each compiled using the 2010 vehicle theft reports that were supplied to the California Highway Patrol by the various law enforcement agencies throughout San Diego County.

“TOP 10” Motorcycle Stolen in San Diego County	“TOP 10” Automobiles Stolen in San Diego County
1. 2007 Suzuki	1. 1994 Honda Acc
2. 2009 Honda	2. 1998 Honda Civ.
3. 2008 Yamaha	3. 1999 Honda Civ.
4. 2009 Yamaha	4. 1991 Honda Acc
5. 2009 Suzuki	5. 1996 Honda Acc
6. 2008 Honda	6. 1997 Honda Acc
7. 2006 Suzuki	7. 1997 Honda Civ.
8. 2008 Suzuki	8. 2000 Honda Civ.
9. 2007 Yama	9. 1991 Toyota Cam
10. 2009 Duca	10. 1990 Honda Acc

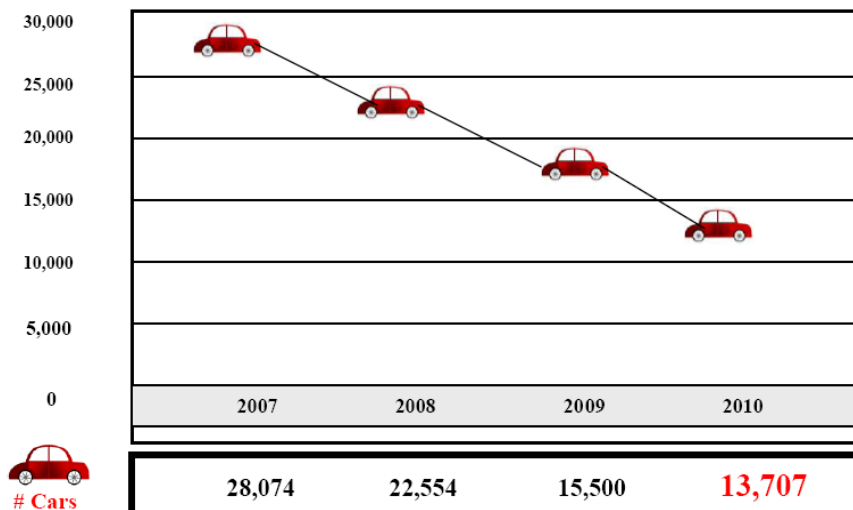
Auto Theft Down 49 Percent

Number of Cars Stolen

Source: CHP

LAST YEAR SAN DIEGO COUNTY SAW A 10.5 PERCENT DROP IN THE NUMBER OF REPORTED VEHICLE THEFTS. THAT DECREASE REPRESENTS THE SECOND STRAIGHT YEAR OF DOUBLE-DIGIT DECLINES.

SINCE 2007, AUTO THEFTS IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY HAS BEEN CUT ALMOST IN HALF.



Note: For auto theft statistics specific to your community please visit: <http://mapping.arjis.org>

“Street Terms/Language” used by Car Thieves:

- A. Any facility (garage, workshop, vacant building) where stolen cars or motorcycles are dismantled.
- B. A vehicle used to hide and transport a stolen motorcycle.
- C. A homemade device used by thieves to by-pass the ignition on a motorcycle in order to steal the bike.
- D. A specially equipped vehicle placed on the streets by law enforcement in order to attract car thieves.
- E. The Vehicle Identification Number or VIN plate on a car is covered-over or removed and a new counterfeit or stolen VIN plate with different numbers is substituted.
- F. A key from a specific model car that has been filed down or shaved in order to fit the ignition of other similar model cars.
- G. Street term for Grand Theft Auto.
- H. An anti-theft device installed in a car designed to cut off or “kill” either the flow of gasoline to the engine or power to the ignition.
- I. A vehicle or person equipped with a tracking device.
- J. California Vehicle Code section for auto theft.

Answers:

- A. Chop Shop
- B. Shoebox
- C. Pigtail
- D. Bait car
- E. VIN Switch
- F. Shaved Key
- G. GTA
- H. Kill Switch
- I. “Lojacked”
- J. 10851



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