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Dog theft on the rise worldwide – 3rd March, 2021

Level 4

There is a new crime that is worrying dog owners. Criminal gangs are engaged in the profitable but illegal business of dog theft. Last week, the dog walker of pop singer Lady Gaga was shot in the chest as thieves stole her two dogs. There is a sharp rise in dog theft in the UK. Lockdowns have led to a boom in pet sales. People bought "pandemic puppies" as companions. Criminals are now stealing dogs, often attacking their owners, and selling the canines.

Dog owners should not post pictures of their pets on social media. They should take their pets for a walk with a friend and not leave them alone. People should ask background questions when buying a dog online. A Change.org petition said the punishment for dog theft is the same as for a stolen smartphone. It said: "Dognapping has almost the same effect on a family as kidnapping....It is time the law reflected this in the sentencing of offenders."

Level 5

A disturbing new crime is emerging that should concern dog owners. Criminal gangs are engaged in the lucrative but illicit business of dog theft. One case in the USA last week was global news as the dog walker of pop singer Lady Gaga was shot in the chest as thieves stole her two dogs. There is a sharp rise in dog theft in the UK. Coronavirus lockdowns have led to a boom in pet sales. People bought "pandemic puppies" for solace and companionship. Criminals are now stealing dogs, often attacking their owners, and selling the canines for up to \$9,000.

Dog owners must take extreme care online and in parks. They should not post pictures of their pets on social media. They should also take their dogs for a walk with a friend and not leave them unattended. The organisation DogLost said people are buying dogs online without asking background questions. A Change.org petition said the punishment for dog theft is the same as for a stolen smartphone. It said: "Dognapping has almost the same effect on a family as kidnapping, as pets are seen as family members. It is time the law reflected this in the sentencing of offenders."

Level 6

A disturbing new crime is emerging worldwide that should be of concern to dog owners. Criminal gangs are engaged in wide-scale dog theft. In the UK it has turned into a lucrative but illicit industry. A theft in the USA last week became global news as the dog walker of pop singer Lady Gaga was shot in the chest as thieves stole her two pet bulldogs. The UK is experiencing a sharp rise in dog theft. Lockdowns due to coronavirus have led to a boom in pet sales as many people look for solace and companionship in animals. Sales of what are being dubbed "pandemic puppies" have skyrocketed. Unscrupulous criminals are now stealing dogs, often attacking their owners, and selling the canines for up to \$9,000.

The police warned dog owners to take extreme care online and in parks. People have been advised not to post pictures of their pets on social media. Police have also recommended people take their dogs for a walk with a friend and not leave dogs unattended in cars. The organisation DogLost said many people are buying dogs online without asking diligent background questions. A Change.org petition said the punishment for dog theft is the same as for a stolen smartphone. It said: "Dognapping has almost the same effect on a family as kidnapping, as pets are seen as family members. It is time the law reflected this in the sentencing of offenders."