# Inspector Dan Green’s undercover team cracks down on surging bag thefts in the City of London nightlife



Inspector Dan Green might not appear to be your typical City of London policeman, clad in casual attire more suited for a sunny day at the beach than patrolling the bustling financial district. However, his unassuming look—a combination of vibrant shorts, a striped shirt, and a baseball cap—belies the serious nature of his mission: tackling the surging problem of bag thefts that plague the Square Mile.

On a bright Thursday evening, Green and his team of the Proactive Acquisitive Crime Team (PACT) roam the crowded streets, where office workers, buoyed by the end of the workday, enjoy their drinks outside countless pubs. Many unsuspecting patrons leave bags filled with laptops and smartphones unattended at their feet, inadvertently inviting thieves to strike. The lure is undeniable in an area where fresh-faced corporate lawyers can command starting salaries of £150,000. As Green notes, such bags often contain not only personal items but also valuable corporate assets, making them prime targets for theft.

Established two years ago, PACT originally focused on phone snatching. However, recognising the evolving tactics of thieves, the team adapted its strategy to address bag theft too, which particularly escalates during busy evening hours. In April, a notable success saw the team apprehend a thief who, upon investigation, was found to have stockpiled 20 laptops in his residence.

Green explains how the criminals they target are seldom opportunistic; instead, they are typically engaged in a variety of illegal activities, often linked to drug use or trading in stolen goods. This underscores a broader issue that cities face—opportunistic crime feeds into more significant societal problems, and addressing it requires proactive measures and robust policing.

The City’s unique blend of high-density office space and vibrant nightlife creates an environment ripe for criminal activity. With 678,000 commuters and a mere 8,600 residents, the area is often teeming with people. This dynamic not only provides ample potential victims but also complicates law enforcement. In this labyrinth of glass towers and historic streets, previous arrests have often revealed criminals who return to familiar haunts, demonstrating a disturbing pattern of habitual offending.

As the evening unfolds, the PACT officers employ keen observational skills to identify suspicious behaviour. According to Green, thieves usually stand out; their body language and lack of purposeful movement betray their intent. Strategies evolve with criminal tactics, and modern technology, such as Bluetooth headphones, has become a tool for thieves to communicate discreetly, allowing them to coordinate their efforts effectively.

Intermittently, the team responds to tips and sightings, often arriving just in time to catch suspects before they vanish into the city’s extensive transport networks. The Liverpool Street station, the busiest railway hub in the UK, serves as both a convenient escape route for criminals and a gathering point for unsuspecting victims.

Despite significant efforts, theft remains a pervasive concern. Between January and April of this year, 247 thefts from licensed premises were reported—an improvement from the previous year but indicative of a continuing trend. The police are keen to emphasise the need for public vigilance, noting that individuals should always keep an eye on their belongings, as the potential for theft is ever-present.

As the night progresses, a crucial moment unfolds at Tower Hill tube station, where a police intervention leads to the arrest of two suspects caught attempting to use multiple debit cards suspiciously. The swift action of officers resulted in the recovery of stolen items, highlighting the effectiveness of proactive policing. The suspects, both foreign nationals, were apprehended as they appeared to be targeting commuters.

In a particularly striking example, Daisy, a marketing professional, was at the pub when her belongings were snatched. Initially sceptical at a police call about a stolen laptop, she felt relief when the officers recovered her items. Such stories resonate not just as personal counts of theft but as reminders of safety in a vibrant yet demanding city landscape. Daisy expressed her mixed emotions: concern about living in a place where theft could occur so close to her, layered with appreciation for the police's quick action.

The experience of Daisy and her colleague highlights the broader implications of urban crime: a city with much to offer is often shadowed by the unease that comes with it. While overall statistics for theft may suggest a downward trend, the emotional and social impact of such crimes often lingers far longer.

While the proactive approach adopted by Green and his team shows promise in curbing the tide of bag theft in London’s business heart, the reality remains that criminals often operate just one step ahead. Increasing public awareness, combined with diligent policing, can contribute to a safer environment for all who enjoy the city's vibrancy—one drink at a time.

As the sun sets on the Square Mile, the balance between enjoying the city’s nightlife and remaining vigilant against its darker undercurrents is as crucial as ever, hinting that the work of law enforcement will remain a steadfast necessity in the pursuit of urban safety.

### Reference Map

1. Lead article
2. Summary [[2]](https://www.cityoflondon.police.uk/news/city-of-london/news/2024/august/three-suspected-bag-thieves-arrested/)
3. Summary [[4]](https://news.sky.com/video/city-of-london-police-release-shocking-footage-of-brazen-bag-theft-as-warning-to-public-12903546)
4. Summary [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14698119/Secret-signs-pub-thief-steal-bag-undercover-police-team.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
5. Summary [[5]](https://www.cityoflondon.police.uk/news/city-of-london/news/2024/october/thief-jailed-and-banned-from-city-of-london/)
6. Summary [[6]](https://www.itv.com/news/london/2024-08-22/thief-caught-snatching-phone-in-soho-caught-by-two-undercover-police-officers)
7. Summary [[3]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/met-police-worker-caught-stealing-purse-in-undercover-sting-a4242326.html)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14698119/Secret-signs-pub-thief-steal-bag-undercover-police-team.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.cityoflondon.police.uk/news/city-of-london/news/2024/august/three-suspected-bag-thieves-arrested/> - In August 2024, three men aged between 32 and 35 were arrested in connection with 16 thefts from pubs in London. The arrests were made at the same address, where stolen property was found. Fifteen of the offences occurred in the City, with one relating to a bag theft near Spitalfields Market. The personal belongings from the bag stolen near Spitalfields Market were returned to the victim. Chief Superintendent Bill Duffy praised the Proactive Acquisitive Crime Team for their intelligence work and efforts in linking the suspects to the thefts. He emphasized the significant impact of such opportunistic crimes on victims and the determination to bring offenders to justice. The City of London Police have been actively addressing bag thefts in the area, urging the public to remain vigilant and report any suspicious activity. Residents and visitors are encouraged to keep an eye on their belongings, as criminals often target unattended bags. For reporting suspicious activity, individuals can call 101 or 999 in emergencies.
3. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/met-police-worker-caught-stealing-purse-in-undercover-sting-a4242326.html> - In September 2019, Agnes Alexander, a 60-year-old Metropolitan Police civilian worker, was caught in an undercover operation stealing cash from a 'lost' purse. The purse, containing £70, was planted as part of an integrity test. Alexander was observed spending some of the cash before being arrested. She admitted to the theft and was given a 20-week suspended jail sentence, along with 120 hours of unpaid work and £207 in costs. The incident led to the loss of her 'good character' and employment. The case highlighted the importance of integrity within the police force and the consequences of dishonesty among its members.
4. <https://news.sky.com/video/city-of-london-police-release-shocking-footage-of-brazen-bag-theft-as-warning-to-public-12903546> - In June 2023, the City of London Police released CCTV footage showing Christopher Antoine, 44, stealing a bag from an unsuspecting diner at the Bloomberg Arcade. Antoine pleaded guilty to 18 bag thefts over a 10-month period between June 2022 and March 2023. The police used the footage to warn the public to 'know where your bag is at all times.' The case underscored the prevalence of bag thefts in the area and the importance of vigilance among the public to prevent such crimes.
5. <https://www.cityoflondon.police.uk/news/city-of-london/news/2024/october/thief-jailed-and-banned-from-city-of-london/> - In October 2024, Yasser Dennoune, 25, was sentenced to 36 weeks in prison and banned from entering the City of London for five years. Dennoune was found guilty of four counts of theft from patrons in licensed premises and fraud after making purchases on a stolen bank card. The court also issued a Criminal Behaviour Order (CBO), prohibiting him from entering the City for five years. Detective Sergeant Helen Bentley emphasized the seriousness of such offences and the commitment to bringing offenders to justice. The sentence aimed to protect businesses and communities from theft and anti-social behaviour.
6. <https://www.itv.com/news/london/2024-08-22/thief-caught-snatching-phone-in-soho-caught-by-two-undercover-police-officers> - In August 2024, a thief was apprehended by two undercover police officers after snatching a phone in Soho. CCTV footage captured the moment a man stole a mobile phone from a victim's back pocket. The officers quickly tackled the thief and returned the phone to its owner. The suspect, Kadi Nasser, 25, was charged with theft, pleaded guilty, and was sentenced to 30 weeks in prison. Detective Superintendent Saj Hussain praised the officers' swift actions and highlighted the Met's efforts to target street thefts and make London safer.
7. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/jan/17/met-halves-luxury-watch-robbery-in-covert-operations-to-lure-criminals> - In January 2024, the Metropolitan Police reported a significant reduction in luxury watch robberies due to covert operations involving undercover officers wearing high-end watches to lure criminals. The operations led to a decrease in annual watch robberies from 113 to 55 in three central London boroughs between July 2022 and July 2023. The stings resulted in 27 arrests, with 21 convictions. Commander Ben Russell praised the bravery of the officers involved and emphasized the importance of such operations in deterring criminals targeting luxury items.