# Strictly star Michelle Tsiakkas highlights spike in London mobile phone robberies after attack



Strictly Come Dancing star Michelle Tsiakkas has spoken out after falling victim to a shocking mobile phone robbery in London, highlighting a growing issue of street crime in the capital. The 29-year-old professional dancer, who appeared on the BBC show in 2023 paired with EastEnders actor Jamie Borthwick, recounted the traumatic incident on social media, revealing how an attacker on an electric bike snatched her phone as she was heading to a dental appointment in Covent Garden. The area was unusually quiet at the time, which she believes made her an easy target. During the snatch, Michelle lost her balance, falling and grazing her knee as she attempted to hold onto her phone. Despite her cries for help, the masked thief sped away, leaving her shaken but fortunately aided by two passersby.

Michelle’s story has brought renewed attention to a disturbing rise in mobile phone thefts across London. Recent statistics from the Metropolitan Police show a 20% increase in robberies from the previous year, with over 81,000 incidents involving phone theft recorded in 2023 alone—equating to nearly 37 thefts daily on the capital’s streets. High-profile hotspots include central areas such as St James’s Park and parts of the West End, known for their tourist footfall and crowded streets. Thefts often involve thieves on electric bikes or scooters, enabling quick getaways, as illustrated by Michelle’s experience.

Experts and law enforcement officials have identified organized criminal gangs as a major driver behind these opportunistic crimes, capitalising on the valuable data accessible via stolen smartphones. Many victims are unaware of the financial risks beyond the immediate loss, as thieves exploit weak security measures to access digital wallets, banking apps, and personal information. The financial fallout can be severe, ranging from fraudulent purchases to unauthorized loan applications. Increased police patrols and technological advancements in phone security are being employed to combat the trend, but experts argue that consumers must also adopt stronger cyber hygiene practices, such as faster device lockdown and cautious app management.

Despite these efforts, investigations into mobile phone thefts face significant challenges. Recent reports reveal that nearly half of all phone theft cases in London are not even screened for further police investigation, reflecting resource constraints and the sheer volume of complaints. In 2023, only around 52% of reported incidents progressed to active cases, leaving many victims without resolution. This lack of follow-through has sparked public concern and calls for both the police and phone manufacturers to do more. Authorities have pressed manufacturers to design phones that are less attractive to thieves, aiming to reduce the resale value of stolen devices and thus the incentive for criminals.

Stealing mobile phones has become a preferred tactic among drug gangs and other criminals, as these devices provide a fast and lucrative source of income. Apple products, in particular, are targeted heavily, representing about 80% of stolen phones according to the police. The scale and sophistication of these crimes underline the urgent need for combined efforts across policing, technology, and public awareness to stem the tide of thefts.

Michelle Tsiakkas’s ordeal serves as a stark reminder that mobile phone theft can happen to anyone, anywhere, often in broad daylight. Her candid sharing aims to raise awareness and caution among the public, encouraging vigilance especially in quieter or more isolated urban spots. As London grapples with this surge in crime, the challenge remains to protect residents and visitors alike from the physical, emotional, and financial harm caused by these increasingly brazen thefts.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.mirror.co.uk/3am/celebrity-news/strictly-come-dancing-star-michelle-35469228)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.mirror.co.uk/3am/celebrity-news/strictly-come-dancing-star-michelle-35469228), [[5]](https://www.met.police.uk/foi-ai/metropolitan-police/disclosure-2024/january-2024/theft-robbery-mobile-phones-january-october2023/), [[4]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/rise-london-mobile-phone-thefts-met-police-b1231196.html)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/26be349d-4717-4815-a221-a749e29de2b2), [[4]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/rise-london-mobile-phone-thefts-met-police-b1231196.html)
* Paragraph 4 – [[6]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/08/10/half-londons-mobile-phone-thefts-not-investigated-by-police/), [[7]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/london-mobile-phone-thefts-met-police-sadiq-khan-mayor-crime-robberies-b1174461.html)
* Paragraph 5 – [[4]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/rise-london-mobile-phone-thefts-met-police-b1231196.html), [[3]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/aug/09/nearly-two-fifths-of-robberies-in-london-last-year-were-for-mobile-phones)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.mirror.co.uk/3am/celebrity-news/strictly-come-dancing-star-michelle-35469228), [[3]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/aug/09/nearly-two-fifths-of-robberies-in-london-last-year-were-for-mobile-phones), [[4]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/rise-london-mobile-phone-thefts-met-police-b1231196.html)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.mirror.co.uk/3am/celebrity-news/strictly-come-dancing-star-michelle-35469228> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ft.com/content/26be349d-4717-4815-a221-a749e29de2b2> - In May 2024, a Financial Times article recounted an individual's experience of having their smartphone stolen by a masked man on an e-bike in central London. The piece highlighted the increasing prevalence of phone thefts, with criminals targeting unlocked devices to access personal financial information. It emphasised the importance of promptly securing stolen phones to prevent unauthorized access to financial apps and digital wallets. The rise in phone theft was attributed to organized criminal gangs exploiting the ease of accessing valuable data stored on smartphones. The article also mentioned measures such as increased police patrols in theft hotspots and advancements in phone security features. Consumers were urged to be more vigilant and adopt better 'cyber hygiene' practices to protect their devices and data. The financial impact of phone theft was noted to be significant, including unauthorized purchases and loan applications. The article stressed the need for more crime-fighting resources and greater consumer awareness to combat this growing problem.
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/aug/09/nearly-two-fifths-of-robberies-in-london-last-year-were-for-mobile-phones> - An August 2023 article from The Guardian reported that nearly two-fifths of robberies in London during the previous year involved mobile phones. The piece highlighted the rising number of phone thefts and urged technology companies to design out the crime by making phones less attractive to thieves. It detailed incidents where victims were stabbed or struck during robberies, leading to significant injuries. The article also noted that young people were disproportionately involved as victims and perpetrators of mobile phone thefts, with tourist hotspots being key locations targeted by criminals. The Metropolitan Police Commissioner and the Mayor of London called on mobile phone manufacturers to collaborate in reducing the resale value of stolen phones, thereby decreasing the incentive for thefts.
4. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/rise-london-mobile-phone-thefts-met-police-b1231196.html> - In May 2024, The Standard reported a significant rise in mobile phone thefts in London, with the Metropolitan Police acknowledging a 'growing and very serious problem.' Approximately 80,000 devices, collectively worth £50 million, were reported stolen in the capital the previous year, marking an increase of about 16,000 from 2023. The article noted that around 80% of stolen phones were made by Apple, leading officers to believe that the brand was being targeted by thieves over Androids. The piece also highlighted that drug gangs had begun switching to phone snatching to make cash, underscoring the lucrative nature of the crime.
5. <https://www.met.police.uk/foi-ai/metropolitan-police/disclosure-2024/january-2024/theft-robbery-mobile-phones-january-october2023/> - A Metropolitan Police Freedom of Information request from January 2024 disclosed that between January and October 2023, there were 39,532 reports of mobile phone theft and 10,259 reports of mobile phone robbery in London. The document provided data on the number of incidents but did not specify the percentage of these thefts and robberies that resulted in arrests or successful prosecutions, as such data was not readily available. The disclosure highlighted the scale of mobile phone-related crimes in the capital during that period.
6. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/08/10/half-londons-mobile-phone-thefts-not-investigated-by-police/> - An August 2024 article in The Telegraph reported that nearly half of reported phone thefts in London were not investigated by the police in the previous year. Only 52% of mobile phone theft cases were 'screened for further investigation' in 2023, indicating a significant gap in addressing these crimes. The piece also noted that nearly 52,000 devices were stolen in the capital that year, with rates rising by up to 50% in some boroughs. The article followed repeated warnings by the police to phone manufacturers that current security measures do not effectively deter thieves.
7. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/london-mobile-phone-thefts-met-police-sadiq-khan-mayor-crime-robberies-b1174461.html> - In August 2024, The Standard reported that almost half of reported mobile phone thefts in London in recent years were not taken forward for investigation by the Metropolitan Police. In 2022, only 51% of mobile phone thefts were 'screened in for further investigation,' rising to 52% in 2023. The article highlighted concerns over the police's response to these crimes and the need for more effective measures to address the issue.