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On Point



# Surveillance leads to arrest CSX thieves

By [MIKE DESMOND](#) (/PEOPLE/MIKE-DESMOND) • JUN 29, 2018



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([http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/wbfo/files/styles/x\\_large/public/201806/CSX.JPG](http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/wbfo/files/styles/x_large/public/201806/CSX.JPG))

*CSX train in Buffalo area.*

WBFO NEWS PHOTO BY MIKE DESMOND

Since 2000, CSX railroad has faced a persistent theft problem, with freight cars broken into while trains were changing crews in Frontier Yard. That's the rail yard which sprawls along Broadway in Buffalo and Cheektowaga.

The thieves were frequently caught on surveillance cameras. In April, CSX police went to the FBI about the thefts and after a couple of months of investigation, three-men were caught in the act Tuesday evening.

U.S. Attorney James Kennedy said in that short time, there were 15-break ins, until Tuesday night.

“The locks on the rail car were cut and a large package was removed and downloaded to Birdwell who put the package in some nearby bushes. As Krieger and Chrostowski were getting ready to cut the locks on another car, Mr. Birdwell was taken into custody on the ground. At that point, the other two fled. They attempted to flee on foot but were apprehended following a short foot race,” Kennedy explained.

The three defendants, Paul Krieger, Ray Chrostowski and Nicholas Birdwell face up to ten-years in prison.

A raid Wednesday morning on an unidentified residence found apparent booty from the thefts, cases of bourbon.

A CSX spokeswoman said railroad police had been making continuing arrests over the years, including these three people, working with Buffalo and Cheektowaga Police Departments.

Assistant Special Agent in Charge Philip Frigm said CSX police have their own sworn law enforcement agency.

“They came to us, I think it was about April of this year, to discuss the on-going issues that they were having. That's the point where we became involved to assist them in identifying the individuals involved and attempting to apprehend them in the process of criminal conduct,” Frigm said.

Kennedy said the FBI was called in by the railroad.

“In April of 2018, the FBI was alerted to a series of thefts being committed on the CSX rail line from multiple sources. According to the CSX official, the information we gained there, the thefts had been taking place in Buffalo on that property since about 2000, so for nearly two decades there had been thefts,” Kennedy remarked.



(<http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/wbfo/files/story/1.JPG>).

CSX rail cars.

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