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First Replate Edition

**HEADLINE:** Solving crime on YouTube;  
Police applaud new way to get IDs.;  
Social network garners many comments, tips, encouragement.

**BYLINE:** Marcus K. Garner, Larry Hartstein; Staff

**BODY:**

YouTube to the rescue?

When Grant Park homeowners Dan and Alyssa Kopp posted video of a Friday afternoon burglary at their home on the popular Web site, the footage went viral with tips and encouragement, and commentary came back to them over the Internet.

Police say the footage is helping, and the Kopps are hoping arrests will follow.

"I would love to see us basically take back our neighborhood," Alyssa Kopp said Monday.

The footage showed four young men scope out the couple's home, kick in the back door, throw a chair at a house dog, and run off with a laptop computer.

But why YouTube?

"It's social networking for vigilante justice," joked Kopp, who had used the online video-sharing service to catch burglars once before. "My husband simply put it up out of convenience. We couldn't believe the response."

Nearly 4,000 viewers watched the 4 minute, 44-second video, posted Sunday afternoon.

And in just over a day, there had been 187 comments.

The Kopps aren't the only ones using YouTube to fight back against crime.

Inspired by the Grant Park couple, Ron McNeely recently posted surveillance video of a burglar casing the parking lot in front of his home at Milltown Lofts in Reynoldstown.

The crook is seen trying to break into a Toyota 4Runner around 3:30 a.m. Aug. 9, then returning over three hours later --- in broad daylight --- to steal a keyboard from a pickup truck.

YouTube "was the quickest way to get it out," McNeely said.

No arrests have been made yet, but McNeely said police were "very happy to get the video."

McNeely, 44, captured the crime on two of four cameras he installed a year ago. The equipment cost nearly \$3,000.

In addition, McNeely's homeowners association is preparing to replace its security cameras.

"We're getting ready to upgrade everything," he said. "We'll get better face shots and license plates."

Randolph McLaughlin, a media law professor at Pace Law School in White Plains, N.Y., said that with the success of shows like "America's Most Wanted" and more readily available video technology, criminals can expect to see more of themselves in the act on video.

"In this time of instant media, everyone's a producer," McLaughlin said. "You have no right of expectation of privacy if you're breaking into somebody's home."

Atlanta Police Maj. Ernest Finley, commander of Zone 3, which includes Grant Park, applauded the use of YouTube to help bust crime.

"Whatever you can do to secure your property that much better is great," Finley said, adding police had some promising leads on the Grant Park burglary case.

Close-ups of the perpetrators go a long way in helping police identify suspects, he said.

"These individuals were not from this community," Finley said of the robbing crew. "That makes it more difficult for police to track them down."

Residents of Howell Station, in northwest Atlanta, say they are struggling with just such a problem. They're considering posting online a video they've recorded after a robbing crew hit more than 50 homes.

"We've had the same group of people robbing the neighborhood every week for the past month or more," Mark Allers said. "They were still breaking into houses while the police were in the neighborhood responding to the last home they were in."

Allers said he hopes that footage of thieves recorded last week will lead police to the perpetrators.

Watch the video, then use our search tool to find recent crime reports in your area.

**LOAD-DATE:** September 1, 2009