

**B.C. car thieves must be punished much more severely:
It is not a stretch to say the lives of virtually all of us in B.C. have been affected by auto crime.**

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Time was we'd kill a horse thief. Steal a man's ride and it was straight to the hanging tree. These days, steal a man's ride and there's a good chance you won't see the inside of a jail.

That's just not right.

The Province's seven-part series on auto crime, *Stolen Lives*, finishes today with 10 recommendations on how to lessen the impact of this epidemic (pages A7, 8 and 9). We'll look at two of the recommendations here.

The first is to introduce mandatory drug treatment in prisons.

As highlighted in the case of serial auto thief Robert Jeremy Osborne, a drug-addicted prisoner does not have to participate in treatment in jail.

How is it our justice system can legally mandate a blood transfusion for a young woman who, on religious grounds, doesn't want one, yet we can't mandate drug treatment for an auto thief? The second recommendation we also strongly support is mandatory prison sentences for all auto thieves. Not probation. Not conditional sentences. Not house arrest. You steal a car; you go to jail. Period.

It is not a stretch to say the lives of virtually all of us in B.C. have been affected by auto crime. Maybe it was your mother who had her golf clubs stolen from the trunk, or maybe it was something far more devastating, like the death of a loved one hit by a drug-addled car thief.

The fact is these criminals need to pay severely for their crimes. The quality of life for all British Columbians depends on it.