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ALLSTON BRIGHTON

Swastikas found carved into 3 vehicles in Brighton

Posted by Matt Rocheleau April 10, 2012 10:54 AM

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By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

Police are investigating reports made this weekend of swastikas found carved on three vehicles parked in a section of Brighton with a concentrated population of Jewish residents, authorities said.

The vehicles are believed to have been marked sometime on Thursday or Friday with what police called "anti-Semitic vandalism."

The eight-day Jewish observance of Passover began at sundown Friday.

One vehicle, parked near 150 Chestnut Hill Ave., also had an expletive carved into its passenger door, officials said. The other two vehicles were parked near 180 Chestnut Hill Ave.

Two of incidents were reported, one on Friday and one reported on Saturday, to police and a third was reported by officers who were walking by one of the vehicles, authorities said.

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None of the vehicle owners are Jewish, police said.

"Regardless of one's ethnicity or religion, such incidents are an assault on the community as well as the diversity that is embraced by the City of Boston," police said in a statement Monday.

The Boston Police Civil Right Unit is investigating the incidents and seeking community assistance, officials said.

Derrek L. Shulman, regional director of Anti-Defamation League New England, said his organization is concerned that the acts of vandalism may have been anti-Semitic hate crimes.

"These things are the building blocks of a disrespectful culture and a disrespectful environment," said Derrek L. Shulman, regional director of Anti-Defamation League New England. "That's why we take events, like this, that some would consider to be minor incidents, very seriously – because we know what they can lead to."

Shulman added that "given the context of these incidents this is clearly an act of hate. To choose that symbol of all symbols is clearly an act of hate. It's deeply disturbing and something that needs to be addressed."

He commended members of the neighborhood's police station, District 14 of the Boston Police, for their "model work" in launching investigations into, and awareness of, the reports.

The vehicles were parked about one quarter mile from Temple B'nai Moshe in a section of Brighton with a large population of Jewish residents.

Shulman said that while nothing has been found to suggest the temple itself was targeted this past weekend or is currently being eyed as a target for vandalism, "it's possible they could have done this not knowing how close they were to the temple, but it's not likely.

He said other concerning incidents have been reported recently at Temple B'nai Moshe.

Several weeks ago, a lamp post next to the temple's front door was toppled and a several months ago, a Jewish banner hanging from the side of the temple was

torn down, Shulman said.

Anyone with information is urged to contact the Civil Rights Unit at 617-343-4527. Anonymous information can be provided to police by calling the CrimeStoppers Unit at 1-800-494-TIPS or by texting the word 'TIP' to CRIME (27463).

E-mail Matt Rocheleau at mjrochele@gmail.com.

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