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# WALLINGFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT



John J. Ventura  
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## News Release

**Date:** September 28, 2022

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### **INDICTMENT CHARGES NEW HAVEN TEEN WITH CARJACKING, FIREARM AND CONSPIRACY OFFENSES**

On September 22, a federal grand jury in Hartford returned a superseding indictment charging TIHAJA ORTIZ-TUCKER, also known as "TJ," 19, of New Haven, with carjacking, firearm and conspiracy offenses.

Through investigation, it was found that in numerous jurisdictions from March through July 2022, Ortiz-Tucker would pose as a potential buyer of used cars advertised by CT residents on Facebook Marketplace. He would meet the sellers for a test drive to purchase said cars. At the test rides conclusion, he and co-conspirators would steal the cars along with other documents such as the bill of sale, title, and other ownership documents at gunpoint. He and his co-conspirators would then pose as legitimate owners of the stolen cars and advertise them for sale on OfferUp.

In addition to these crimes, Ortiz-Tucker was involved in two carjackings of Uber drivers in Wallingford on May 2, 2022 and May 4, 2022. In both instances, an Uber driver picked up the carjacker in New Haven and drove to Wallingford where the cars were taken from the Uber drivers at gunpoint. Both cars were later recovered in the same area of Hamden. (Reference the previous press release from May 5, 2022)

The indictment charges Ortiz-Tucker with one count of conspiracy, an offense that carries a maximum term of imprisonment of five years; three counts of taking a motor vehicle from a person by force, violence and intimidation ("carjacking"), an offense that carries a maximum term of imprisonment of 15 years on each count; and one count of carrying, using and brandishing a firearm in connection with a crime of violence, an offense that carries a mandatory consecutive sentence of at least seven years.



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Ortiz-Tucker was arrested on July 22, 2022, and has been detained since September 2, 2022 when his bond was revoked.

This matter is being investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Safe Streets Violent Crime Task Force, the Connecticut State Police and the Wallingford, New Haven, Hamden, Waterbury, and Bridgeport Police Departments. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Sarah P. Karwan and Tara E. Levens.

The Wallingford Police Department would like to encourage those who sell and purchase items online, to use visible, well-lit and well-traveled areas to conduct their in-person business. The Wallingford Police Department has a designated, marked area in the front parking lot for citizens to use as a monitored, safe meet-up location.