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Robbers have hearty meal after break-in

Yolandé Hayward HERALD REPORTER

THREE foreign students were robbed at their university-arranged digs early yesterday by four armed men who then tucked into a hearty breakfast.

The four men burst into the Summerstrand home of the three Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University students – two Germans and a Malawian – early yesterday and threatened them with a screwdriver.

One of the Germans, a 22-year-old architecture student, said she awoke in her Sharwood Road home at 3.45am to find four men standing over her bed.

She said she had been woken earlier by a noise in the kitchen and saw her bedroom door slightly ajar, but thought it was the wind and went back to sleep.

The men, one of whom was armed with a screwdriver, shouted at her before they robbed her of her laptop, cellphone, iPod, credit card and wallet.

The four then went to her housemates' rooms, robbed them, forced them into her bedroom and ordered them to lie on the floor.

The men then left the room and closed the door behind them. "It sounded like they locked us in. We only later found out they didn't lock the door."

The men then went to the kitchen and made themselves breakfast.

"We were very scared, so we waited until we were sure the robbers were gone before we came out of the bedroom" and phoned the police.

"We phoned the emergency number, but that was a mess. It took a long time before we were helped."

Nobody was hurt in the incident. "They didn't physically hurt us, but were very rude to us."

The student, who only arrived in Port Elizabeth a week ago, came to South Africa with high expectations and wanted to experience its beauty. NMMU had, however, advised her on home security and warned her about crime in the city as part of its orientation programme for foreign students.

She said the gang not only robbed her of her belongings but also her sense of security and her positive view of the country. "I feel very uncomfortable. I am scared around strangers and still very shocked."

Police spokesman Captain Sandra Janse van Rensburg said the gang gained access by breaking a sliding door lock and stole six laptops, two cameras, two cellphones, a credit card and an iPod worth about R40000. The organised crime unit is investigating the case.

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NMMU spokesman Roslyn Baatjies said: "The university is providing (trauma) counselling and is busy getting a detailed analysis of security at the home to ensure that it does not happen again."



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