

## 71 year old woman steals flowers from young boy's grave'

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A woman who was allegedly caught on camera stealing flowers from the grave of an 11-year-old boy has been charged with theft. The unnamed 71-year-old is due to appear at Redbridge Magistrates' Court today where she is will be accused of taking the tributes from the grave of Robert Stringer in Barking, East London. Yesterday it was claimed by the boy's family that the disgusted daughter of the woman who was filmed had given her name to police. Robert's uncle Terence Rose said the family had received a call from officers to tell them the information.

Mr Rose said: 'The police called and told us they had received a phone call from the woman's daughter. She was appalled to see her mum on the CCTV images. 'The police wouldn't tell us any more information.' A spokesman for the Metropolitan Police later confirmed that a member of the public had contacted them to identify the alleged thief. But she would not confirm if it was the woman's daughter who had phoned with the information.

They added that officers would approach the suspect later today. Footage of the woman taking flowers was captured secretly by Robert's family after a number of plants and ornaments went missing from the grave at the Rippleside cemetery. Robert's cousin Steve Rose spoke today of the family's shock at what the footage uncovered.

He said: 'We were surprised, everyone expected it to be kids. It's an awful, callous crime and none of us can understand how she could do that to a child. 'Robert was a lovely lad and it was a terrible tragedy. 'Potted plants and baskets started to disappear on a regular basis. That's why we installed the camera. 'I want this woman prosecuted for the terrible things she's done. 'It's not the cost of the flowers, it's the principle. The police have been very helpful but they told me she may only get a warning.'

Robert's aunt Kathleen Harris, 75, said: 'I'm devastated because we have cared for the grave for the last 30 years. I'm so angry. I want her to be named and shamed. 'For her to come along and fill her boots like that is just wicked. What right has she got to steal from that grave?' Robert's parents George and Joan never got over his death, which happened in 1980, said the family.

His father George died in 1984 and mother Joan died in 2009. They were buried in the same plot as Robert. Today a worker at the cemetery said: 'The council chief is coming to meet us today to talk about how this could have happened. She's furious apparently. 'But it's a huge cemetery and we can't be everywhere at once. 'I don't recognise the woman from the pictures. She's not someone I've seen here before.'