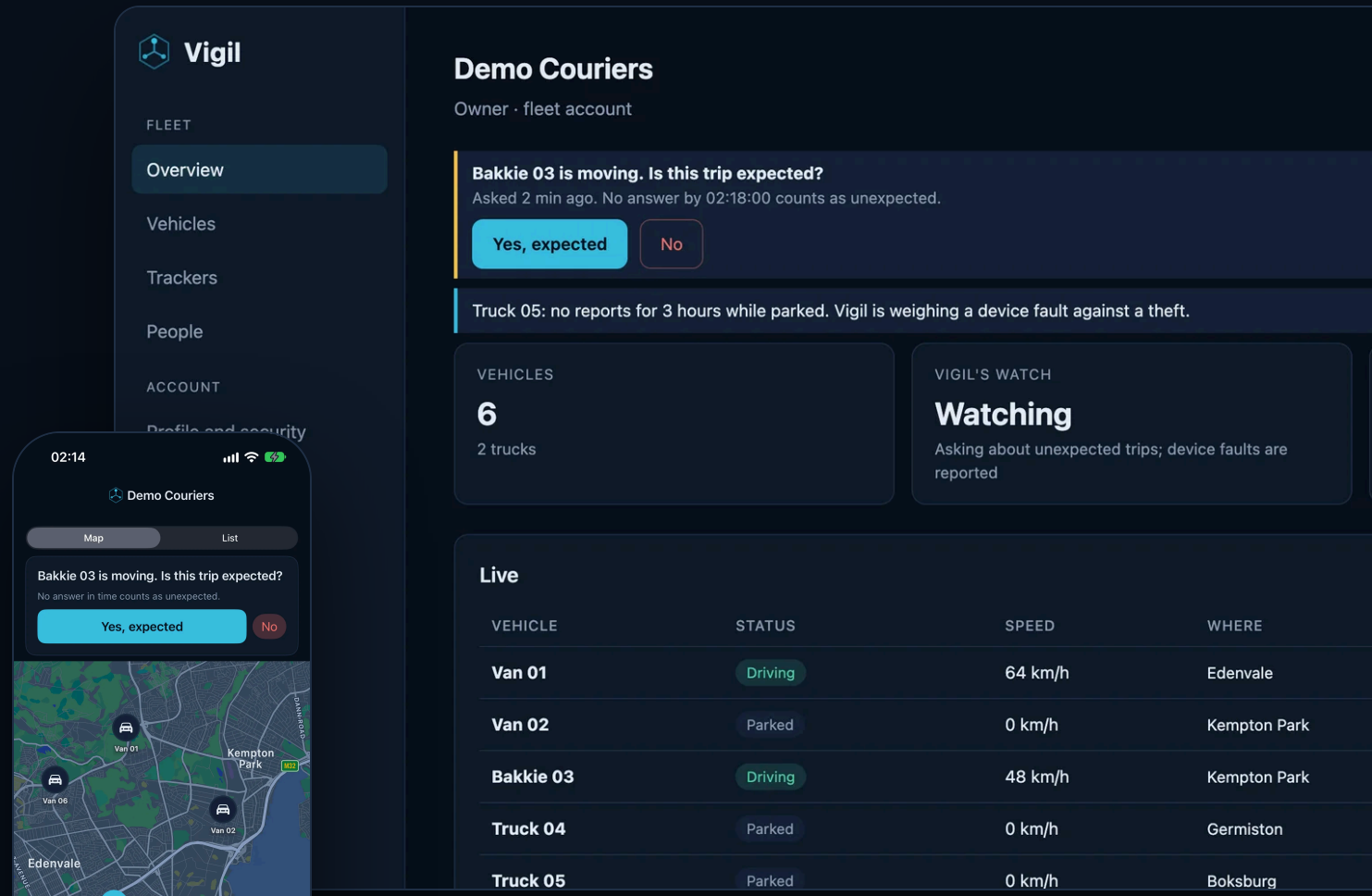
# Vigil

Deciding when a car is being stolen, from a tracker's live feed

Sbusiso Mdingi · 2026



# About 130 vehicles a day are taken in South Africa

**48**

**carjackings a day**

17,464 recorded by the police in the year to March 2026.

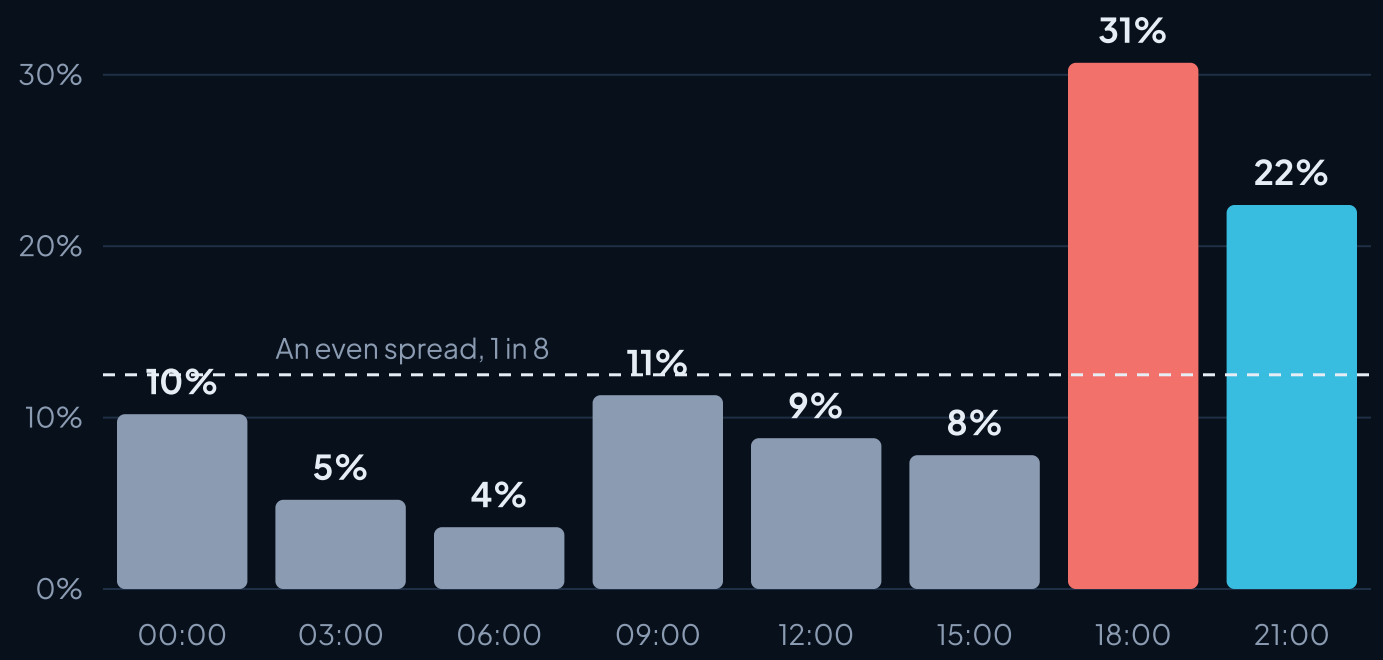
**81**

**vehicles stolen a day**

29,671 taken with nobody in them, in the same year.

Many had a tracker. Its alarms are blunt: most odd trips are someone running late, so an alarm on each is soon ignored, and a quiet theft raises none.

# Carjackings bunch up in the evening




**31%** of carjackings happen between 18:00 and 21:00, two and a half times an even share. Place matters as much: in Gauteng, Bramley's carjacking rate per car is **9.7 times** the national one. Vigil starts every vehicle with this risk for its place and hour.

# Every vehicle has its own normal

### When it leaves

A 05:00 start is odd for a car that leaves at 07:00, and normal for a delivery bakkie.

### Where it goes

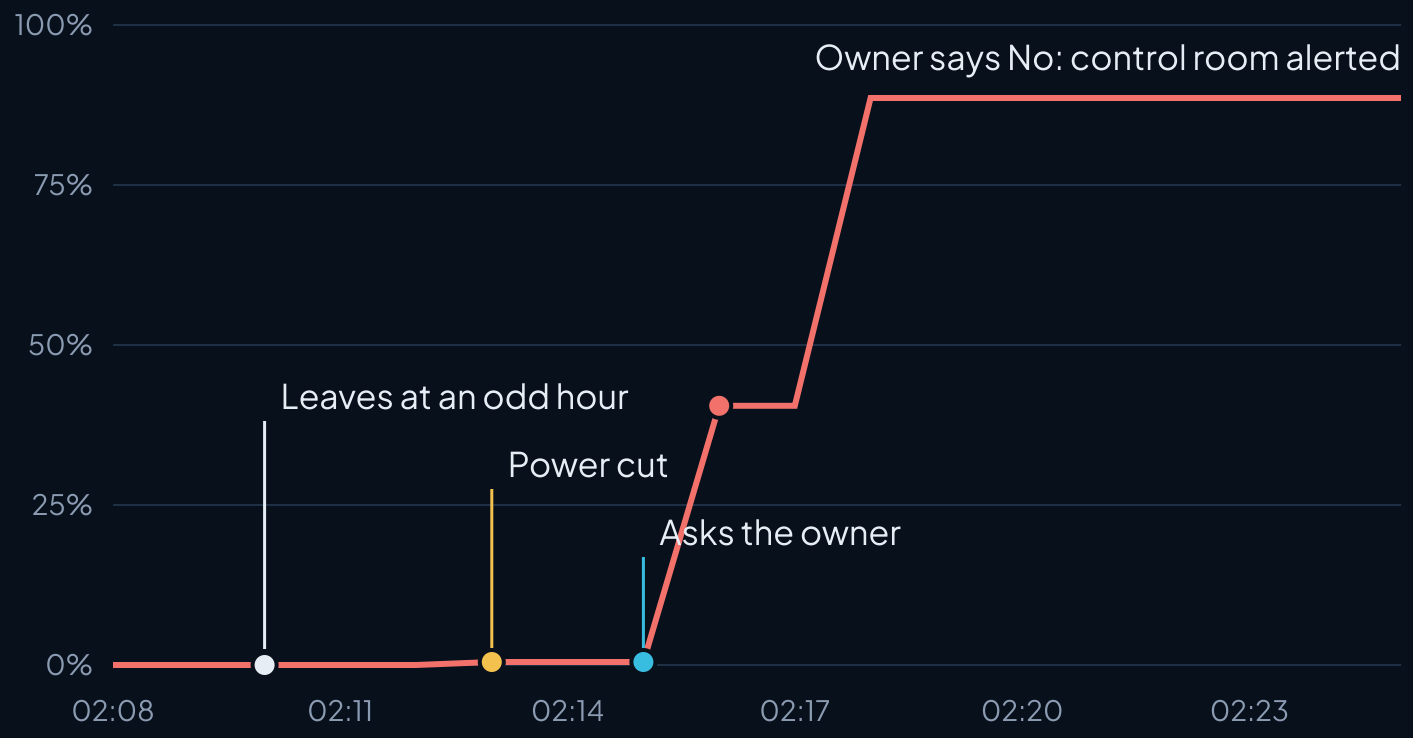
Where it parks overnight, the roads it uses and where it stops.

### How its unit behaves

How often it reports, and which alerts it can send at all.

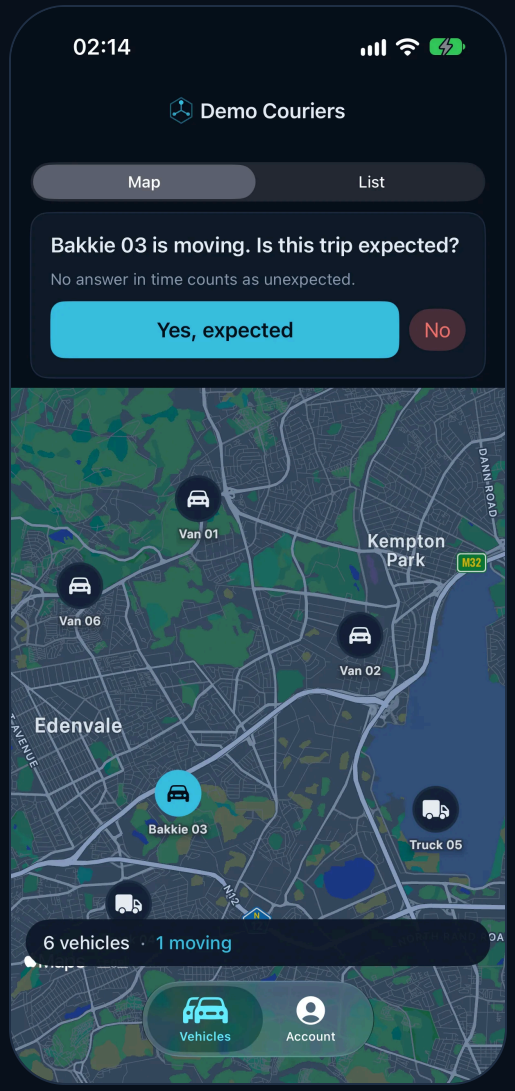
Vigil learns this from each vehicle's own history, and lets older trips fade, so a new routine becomes normal within a couple of months.

# A night theft, minute by minute




A made-up car leaves home at 02:10. Leaving at an odd hour alone says little: theft stays at **0.01%**, because an odd trip by the owner is far likelier. A power cut lifts it to 0.5%, and Vigil asks. When the owner says No, the control room is alerted and decides whether to send a recovery team.

# It asks before it alerts anyone




## Watch closely

Costs almost nothing, so it starts at a theft chance of about 1 in 180,000.

## Ask the owner

A question costs little next to a R250,000 car. After five minutes of watching, Vigil asks from a 0.4% chance.

## Alert the control room

A false alert is costed at R2,000, so for a car this waits for about a 13% chance, or the owner's No. Someone there sees what Vigil has seen and decides whether to send a recovery team.

When a hijacking is the likeliest explanation, nobody is asked, because a question could warn the hijacker.

# 511 ordinary trips, no false alarms

**0**

**questions or alerts**

A test fleet's trips after 1 September 2026, replayed minute by minute as if live, with each report shown only once it had arrived. Vigil had learned only from the trips before that date.

# Staged thefts: what it caught within the hour




30 made-up incidents of each kind, written into real parked nights and trips. When the unit reports something, Vigil acts in minutes. A theft that looks like ordinary driving is not caught from tracker data alone.

# What it can't tell you yet

1. The history holds no real thefts, so how a theft shows up is assumed. Halving or doubling the evidence moves the stripped-unit catches from 7 to 28 of 30.
2. A theft along the usual road, and most hijackings, look like ordinary driving.
3. The costs behind every decision are judgements, not measurements.

The full write-up: **mdingi.co.za/work/vigil-vehicle-alert-engine**

A demo: **sbusiso@mdingi.co.za**