

Residents from Alton, Brighton, Godfrey, Bunker Hill and Wood River Among Those Named In Federal Indictment

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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EAST ST. LOUIS — Eleven Southern Illinois residents have been charged by a grand jury with various federal crimes for their alleged roles in a criminal enterprise accused of stealing vehicles and motorcycles from a downtown St. Louis warehouse, transporting them across state lines and selling them in southern Illinois from December 2025 through April 2026.

Residents of Alton, Godfrey, Brighton, Bunker Hill, and Wood River have been charged in the case.

According to the indictment, conspirators made multiple trips to steal vehicles and motorcycles from the warehouse. They then transported the stolen goods back to southern Illinois to conceal and sell them, the indictment states.

“Federal criminal law specifically applies to criminal rings that attempt to evade detection by working across state lines,” U.S. Attorney Steven D. Weinhoeft said. “This case shows what happens when federal, state, county, and local agencies on both sides of the river refuse to let a geographic boundary become an impediment to bringing offenders to justice.”

The indictment states some of the stolen items include a 1972 Chevrolet Chevelle SS. It also refers to a 1997 John Deere 6675 skids.

“Thanks to the comprehensive and collaborative investigative work of the FBI, together with our federal, state, and local law enforcement partners, the deliberate activities of these 11 individuals have been disrupted,” FBI Springfield Special Agent in Charge Ryan Presley said. “We are not done, and we will not waver in our commitment to identify and investigate people and their criminal enterprises across Southern Illinois.”

The grand jury charged:

- Ashley J. Fulmer, 29, of Godfrey, with one count of conspiracy against the U.S. and one count of sale or possession of stolen motor vehicle.
- Jason A. Bristow, 46, of Alton, with one count of conspiracy against the U.S. and two counts of sale or possession of stolen motor vehicle.
- Trevonte L. Caldwell, 30, of Brighton, with one count of conspiracy against the U. S. and two counts of sale or possession of stolen motor vehicle.
- Jeremy D. Churchman, 46, of Brighton, with one count of conspiracy against the U. S. and two counts of sale or possession of stolen motor vehicle.

- Brenda L. Donithan, 28, of Alton, with one count of conspiracy against the U.S. and one count of sale or possession of stolen motor vehicle.
- Ethan C. Humbert, 50, of Bunker Hill, with one count of sale or possession of stolen motor vehicle.
- Douglas F. Manns, 48, of Alton, with one count of conspiracy against the U.S. and four counts of sale or possession of stolen motor vehicle.
- Wesley P. Martin, 28, of Wood River, with one count of conspiracy against the U. S. and one count of interstate transportation of a stolen vehicle.
- Christopher M. Palmer, 48, of Godfrey, with one count of conspiracy against the U. S. and one count of sale or possession of stolen motor vehicle.
- Robert L. Tidwell, 59, of Brighton, with one count of conspiracy against the U.S. and three counts of interstate transportation of a stolen vehicle.
- Michael A. Wittman, 51, of Alton, with one count of conspiracy against the U.S. and two counts of sale or possession of stolen motor vehicle.

An indictment is merely a formal charge against a defendant. Under the law, a defendant is presumed to be innocent of a charge until proved guilty beyond a reasonable doubt to the satisfaction of a jury.

Convictions for sale or possession of stolen motor vehicle and interstate transportation of a stolen vehicle are punishable by up to 10 years' imprisonment and conspiracy against the U.S. are up to 5 years.

The St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department, the Metro East Auto Theft Task Force, the Alton Police Department, the FBI Springfield Field Office, the St. Clair County Sheriff's Department, the Madison County Sheriff's Department, the Macoupin County Sheriff's Department, the Illinois State Police, St. Louis County Police and the Bridgeton Police Department contributed to the investigation.

Assistant U.S. Attorney John Trippi is prosecuting the case.