



NEWS RELEASE
GREENE COUNTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEY
DAN PATTERSON

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08/17/2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Man Charged with Felony Stealing for Catalytic Converter Theft

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – Greene County Prosecuting Attorney Dan Patterson announces that Jason Cole Cottrell, 41, of Springfield, MO has been charged with a felony stealing for the theft of a catalytic converter.

On August 15, 2021, Springfield Police officers were dispatched to a location on North Fremont Avenue for a report of a male cutting of catalytic converters from a Nissan Frontier. Officers arrived and located Jason Cottrell in possession of the stolen catalytic converters and battery powered reciprocating saw. A warrant was issued for Cottrell's arrest and bond was set at \$5,000.

If convicted of this felony offense, the Defendant could face a sentence of up to seven years in the Missouri Department of Corrections, and up to a \$10,000 fine.

Greene County has seen a dramatic rise in catalytic converter thefts. To protect your vehicle, park in a secured garage or well-lit area. Please report any suspicious activity to law enforcement immediately; it only takes a few minutes to completely remove a catalytic converter.

Mr. Patterson cautions that the charges contained in the felony complaint are merely allegations and that the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty in court.

Copies of the felony complaint and probable statement filed in this case are attached to this release. The Missouri Supreme Court ethics rules prohibit comments on the facts or investigation of this case beyond those contained in the felony complaint and probable cause statement that are part of the public record.

Subject: Greene County Prosecuting Attorney Press Release, State v.
Cottrell, 2131-CR02567

**This case is being prosecuted by Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Darren
Dodd. It is being investigated by the Springfield Police Department and Detective
Chad Immekus is the lead investigator assigned to the case.**

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SPRINGFIELD POLICE DEPARTMENT



PROBABLE CAUSE STATEMENT

Date: 08/16/2021 Case #: SPD210815028749

I, CHAD IMMEKUS, a law enforcement officer, knowing that false statements on this form are punishable by law, state as follows:

1. I have probable cause to believe that JASON COLE COTTRELL, White/Male, DOB [REDACTED]/1980, committed one or more criminal offenses.

2. The following crime(s) happened on 2021/08/15 15:00 - 2021/08/15 21:00 at 2457 N FREMONT AVE in Springfield, Greene County, Missouri.

3. The facts supporting this belief are as follows:

On 08/15/2021 Officers were dispatched to 2457 N. Fremont for a report of a male cutting a catalytic converter from a Nissan Frontier that was being towed on a car dolly. Officer J. Lancaster arrived and contacted Jason Cottrell at the rear of the Nissan. Officer Lancaster reported upon contact Cottrell was removing a car jack from under the Nissan. Cottrell explained he had been hired to tow the vehicle for a friend who was supposed to fix the truck. Cottrell stated the friend involved was named "Todd", but he refused to give any other information about the friend. The Nissan was registered to JH. When Officer Lancaster contacted the number Cottrell had for JH, he spoke with his sister PL, who confirmed JH was currently in the hospital. PL advised the Nissan had been wrecked and JH gave permission for a male named "John" to tow the truck and make repairs. PL confirmed Cottrell and another male towed the Nissan from her residence at 418 E. Arrowhead in Springfield. PL told Officer Lancaster the Nissan was to be towed to 911 W. Brower, and she didn't understand why it would be at 2457 N. Fremont. PL reported she would respond to the scene with JH's wife, RH.

While officers waited for PL and RH to respond, Cpl. K. Powers reported he observed a catalytic converter and a Skil battery powered sawzall under the passenger side of the 2015 Nissan. Cpl. Powers reported Cottrell said they originally towed the Nissan with a white van, but it had broken down, so they borrowed a GMC SUV and towed the vehicle to 2457 N. Fremont. Cottrell refused to provide any information about the "friend" he was helping tow the vehicle. Cottrell admitted to Cpl. Powers he had cut the catalytic converters from the Nissan, claiming it was for safety while towing the vehicle. Cottrell would not provide any information about where he was supposed to take the vehicle and claimed he was only supposed to tow the vehicle and would not be the one making repairs. Cpl. Powers said Cottrell told him the male that arranged for the tow had become frustrated after the van broke down and left him with the broken-down van and the towed Nissan.

The damage to the Nissan was described as front-end damage, and Cpl. Powers examined the area where the catalytic converters had been cut. Cpl. Powers reported he did not see any damage to the exhaust system. Cpl. Powers described the Nissan as having a cross member or metal that was in a "X" shape that covered the exhaust. Cpl. Powers reported each catalytic converter had clean, angled cuts on both ends of the converters. Cpl. Powers located the two catalytic converters that had been cut from the vehicle and the blade on the Skil Sawzall was described as a fine-tooth blade commonly used for cutting metal. Cpl. Powers reported he researched the value of the converters online at yourmechanic.com and replacement value for the Nissan was estimated at \$1,317.37.

When PL and RH arrived on scene, they identified Cottrell as one of the two men present who towed the Nissan from PL's residence. Both PL and RH confirmed no one had permission to cut or remove parts from the Nissan, including the catalytic converters. RH said they would press charges against Cottrell for cutting and removing the two catalytic converters from the Nissan.

I was assigned the follow-up investigation for this incident and reviewed the reports and bodycam footage of Cpl. Powers and Officer Lancaster. I noticed during their conversations with Cottrell, he did not want to provide any specific details about anyone else associated with this incident and claimed he had cut the catalytic converters because they had been previously damaged and were dragging on the ground, presenting a safety issue while towing the Nissan. When Cpl. Powers confronted Cottrell with the cross member and steel plate installed on the Nissan that would prevent the converters or any other part of the exhaust system from dragging on the ground, Cottrell appeared frustrated and said he only did what he thought was right and he was not a mechanic.

I responded to the Greene County Jail, where I met with Cottrell in an interview room, and I conducted a post-Miranda interview with him. In summary, Cottrell admitted during the recorded interview that he cut both catalytic converters from the vehicle with the intention of selling them to make money. When I explained to Cottrell that I didn't believe his explanation to Cpl. Powers about the converters dangling from the Nissan, and I pointed out that he cut both converters on each end of the converter perfectly without any other parts of the exhaust, he told me "I get it" and he "was in the wrong." I told Cottrell I believed he knew selling catalytic converters was a way to make money and he was in possession of a truck that already had significant damage, so he made the decision to cut the catalytic converters to sell them. Cottrell told me "Yup, yeah you're right." Cottrell told me he knew local scrapyards would buy catalytic converters.

I am requesting that an arrest warrant be issued because (complete at least one of the following):

1. I have reasonable grounds to believe the defendant will not appear upon a summons based on the facts stated above and the following information:

The defendant recently failed to appear for a scheduled court appearance on 07/08/2021 through the Springfield Municipal Court and had a warrant ordered for his arrest on 07/27/2021. The defendant had a court case through Greene County Circuit Court in 2020 (case 1931-CR05316) where he failed to appear for multiple scheduled court appearances and had warrants issued for his arrest.

Not Applicable

2. I have reasonable grounds to believe the defendant poses a danger to a crime victim, the community, or any other person based on the facts stated above and the following information:

The theft of catalytic converters from vehicles has become prevalent in Springfield and Greene County due to the value of precious metals located within the converter. This has resulted in a loss of hundreds to thousands of dollars for victims within this community. The defendant admitted he cut the two catalytic converters from the victim's vehicle so he could sell them.

Not Applicable

The facts contained above are true to the best of my information and belief.

/s/ Chad Immekus

1309

Corporal

Signature

DSN

Title