



NEWS RELEASE  
GREENE COUNTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEY  
DAN PATTERSON

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1010 Boonville  
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09/20/2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Man Charged With Felony Stealing in Multiple Catalytic Converter Thefts

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – Greene County Prosecuting Attorney Dan Patterson announces that John W. Griffith, 37, of Springfield, MO has been charged with two counts of felony stealing for the theft of two catalytic converters and one count of attempted felony stealing, also involving a catalytic converter.

During the overnight over hours of February 11, 2021 and February 12, 2021, two catalytic converts were cut from vehicles near Kentwood Avenue. Around 3:00 AM on February 12, 2021, a citizen noticed a vehicle parked behind his SUV and the suspects fled. The citizens SUV was lifted with a jack behind the front driver's side tire. The citizen called 911 and gave a description of the suspects' vehicle and law enforcement promptly located and stopped the vehicle and arrested the suspects. Located in the vehicle were two catalytic converters and two battery powered reciprocating saws.

If you see suspicious activity, please call 911 and report it as soon as possible.

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. Griffith,

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

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IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF GREENE COUNTY, MISSOURI  
Associate Division \_\_\_\_\_

STATE OF MISSOURI,	)	
Plaintiff,	)	
	)	
vs.	)	Case No.
	)	
JOHN W. GRIFFITH,	)	OCN#
	)	
Defendant.	)	PA File No. 077446351

**FELONY COMPLAINT**

COUNT I

The Prosecuting Attorney of the County of Greene, State of Missouri, charges that the defendant, in violation of Section 570.030, RSMo, committed the class D felony of stealing, punishable upon conviction under Sections 558.002 and 558.011, RSMo, in that on or between February 11, 2021 and February 12, 2021, in the County of Greene, State of Missouri, the defendant appropriated a catalytic converter of a value of at least seven hundred fifty dollars, which property was owned by Mitchell Bennett, and defendant appropriated such property without the consent of Mitchell Bennett and with the purpose to deprive Mitchell Bennett thereof, and

Defendant is a prior offender under Section 558.016, RSMo. Defendant is also a persistent offender and, pursuant to Sections 558.016 and 557.036, RSMo., if found guilty of a class B, C, D, or E felony is punishable by sentence to the authorized term of imprisonment for the offense that is one class higher than the offense for which the defendant is found guilty in that the defendant has been found guilty of two or more felonies committed at different times. The felonies are as follows:

1. On or about February 19, 2013, defendant was found guilty of the felony of Possession of Controlled Substance, in the Circuit Court of Greene County, State of Missouri, in case number 1231-CR01956-01; and
2. On or about February 19, 2013, defendant was found guilty of the felony of Physically Take Property Appropriated from Victim, in the Circuit Court of Greene County, State of Missouri, in case number 1231-CR06564-01; and
3. On or about February 19, 2013, defendant was found guilty of the felony of Possession of Controlled Substance, in the Circuit Court of Greene County, State of Missouri, in case number 1231-CR04275-01.

COUNT II

The Prosecuting Attorney of the County of Greene, State of Missouri, charges that the defendant, in violation of Section 570.030, RSMo, committed the class D felony of stealing, punishable upon conviction under Sections 558.002 and 558.011, RSMo, in that on or between February 11, 2021 and February 12, 2021, in the County of Greene, State of Missouri, the defendant appropriated a catalytic converter of a value of at least seven hundred fifty dollars, which property was in the possession of Christopher Oliver, and defendant appropriated such property without the consent of Christopher Oliver and with the purpose to deprive

Christopher Oliver thereof, and

Defendant is a prior offender under Section 558.016, RSMo. Defendant is also a persistent offender and, pursuant to Sections 558.016 and 557.036, RSMo., if found guilty of a class B, C, D, or E felony is punishable by sentence to the authorized term of imprisonment for the offense that is one class higher than the offense for which the defendant is found guilty in that the defendant has been found guilty of two or more felonies committed at different times. The felonies are as follows:

1. On or about February 19, 2013, defendant was found guilty of the felony of Possession of Controlled Substance, in the Circuit Court of Greene County, State of Missouri, in case number 1231-CR01956-01; and
2. On or about February 19, 2013, defendant was found guilty of the felony of Physically Take Property Appropriated from Victim, in the Circuit Court of Greene County, State of Missouri, in case number 1231-CR06564-01; and
3. On or about February 19, 2013, defendant was found guilty of the felony of Possession of Controlled Substance, in the Circuit Court of Greene County, State of Missouri, in case number 1231-CR04275-01.

### COUNT III

The Prosecuting Attorney of the County of Greene, State of Missouri, charges that the defendant, in violation of Section 570.030, RSMo, committed the class E felony of attempted stealing, punishable upon conviction under Sections 558.002, 558.011, and 562.012 RSMo, in that on or about February 12, 2021, in the County of Greene, State of Missouri, the defendant lifted a Ford Expedition with a scissor jack owned by Frederick Roy, and such conduct was a substantial step towards the commission of the offense of stealing of a catalytic converter, of a value of more than \$750, and was done for the purpose of committing such stealing, and

Defendant is a prior offender under Section 558.016, RSMo. Defendant is also a persistent offender and, pursuant to Sections 558.016 and 557.036, RSMo., if found guilty of a class B, C, D, or E felony is punishable by sentence to the authorized term of imprisonment for the offense that is one class higher than the offense for which the defendant is found guilty in that the defendant has been found guilty of two or more felonies committed at different times. The felonies are as follows:

1. On or about February 19, 2013, defendant was found guilty of the felony of Possession of Controlled Substance, in the Circuit Court of Greene County, State of Missouri, in case number 1231-CR01956-01; and
2. On or about February 19, 2013, defendant was found guilty of the felony of Physically Take Property Appropriated from Victim, in the Circuit Court of Greene County, State of Missouri, in case number 1231-CR06564-01; and
3. On or about February 19, 2013, defendant was found guilty of the felony of Possession of Controlled Substance, in the Circuit Court of Greene County, State of Missouri, in case number 1231-CR04275-01

The facts that form the basis for this information and belief are contained in the attached probable cause statement concerning this matter, which statement is made a part hereof and is submitted herewith as a basis upon which this court may find the existence of probable cause for the issuance of the warrant.

WHEREFORE, the Prosecuting Attorney prays that an arrest warrant be issued as provided by law.

DAN PATTERSON  
Prosecuting Attorney of the County of  
Greene, State of Missouri, by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Darren Dodd', written over a horizontal line.

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# SPRINGFIELD POLICE DEPARTMENT



## PROBABLE CAUSE STATEMENT

Date: 02/12/2021 Case #: 21-04835 / 21-04843

I, Detective Daniel Rankey 1105, 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 John W. Griffith, White/Male, DOB [REDACTED]/1984, committed one or more criminal offenses.
2. The following crime(s) happened on 02/11/2021 1700 hrs. – 02/12/2021 0400 hrs. at 3035 N. Kentwood Ave. & 3050 N. Kentwood Ave. in Springfield, Greene County, Missouri.
3. The facts supporting this belief are as follows:

Probable cause was established indicating John Griffith and Eric Presley committed two counts of felony stealing after removing catalytic converters from two vehicles during overnight hours, between 02/11/21 at 1700 hrs. and 02/12/21 at 0400 hrs.. The offenses took place at 3035 N. Kentwood Ave. and 3050 N. Kentwood Ave., locations within the State of Missouri, County of Greene, City of Springfield.

On 02/12/21 at approximately 0245 hrs., F.R., who resided in an apartment at 3012 N. East Ave., exited his home at which time he observed a dark-colored four-door passenger car with a trailer hitch parked behind his Ford Expedition. A male was observed in the driver's seat of the car while a taller white male was observed standing next to the passenger side of his SUV. The male in the driver's seat was wearing a black jacket and a winter style hat, while the male outside was wearing a ball cap with a white design on it.

Unaware of what the subjects were doing, F.R. advised them they needed to move their vehicle so he could leave. The subject standing outside the car then re-entered the vehicle at which time the subjects departed the location. Upon starting his vehicle and reversing, F.R. felt a "clunk". Upon exiting his vehicle in an attempt to determine where the noise originated from, F.R. discovered a scissor style vehicle jack in the extended position just behind his driver's side front wheel. It appeared that F.R.'s SUV had been jacked up slightly and when he attempted to reverse, fell off the jack.

F.R. proceeded to a local gas station at which time he observed the aforementioned suspect vehicle pass by the location, at which time he attempted to follow the car. He indicated he followed the car through a series of turns in a residential area, ultimately losing sight of the car around Jefferson Ave./Turner St.. During this period of time F.R. called 911 reporting the events.

As Ofc. T. Anderson was responding to the call-for-service, he observed the suspect vehicle enter onto Kearney St. with no headlights illuminated. He ultimately conducted a traffic stop on the vehicle in the parking lot of 650 W. Kearney St.. Ofc. Anderson identified the operator of the car as John Griffith and the sole passenger as Eric Presley. Upon contacting the duo, Ofc. Anderson

observed two catalytic converters laying on the front passenger side floorboard at Presley's feet. During the course of the investigation, Ofc. Anderson asked Griffith about the converters. Griffith responded by stating that the converters belonged to Presley, and they had just picked them up from "somewhere". He claimed his converter was recently stolen and he was going to replace it with one of the converters Presley had "given him".

While on scene, Ofc. Anderson observed narcotic paraphernalia in plain view within the car. As a result, a probable cause search was conducted. During the search, narcotic paraphernalia was recovered from the vehicle, and the converters were seized given that it was believed they were stolen under the circumstances. In addition to the converters, the following items were also located in the vehicle which were also seized given that they were likely used in the commission of catalytic converter thefts: Two battery powered DeWalt band reciprocating saws; a Large pipe cutter; a Hacksaw; and Other assorted tools commonly used in the theft of catalytic converters.

Presley and Griffith were ultimately arrested for possessing narcotic paraphernalia and booked into the Greene County Jail.

Later that morning, a male named C.O. contacted police advising that the catalytic converter had been stolen from his Toyota Tundra while it was parked on the Holiday Inn parking lot at 3050 N. Kentwood Ave., which happened to be in the area of F.R.'s residence. The theft occurred between 02/11/21 at 1900 hrs. and 02/12/21 at 0600 hrs., when he discovered the theft. C.O. indicated the pickup belonged to his employer, Edge Consulting Engineers, located in Prairie Du Sac Wisconsin.

In addition to the information C.O. provided, a second report was filed with the Springfield Police Department by a male named M.B.. M.B. indicated that the catalytic converter on his Nissan Frontier had been stolen overnight as well. M.B. indicated the theft occurred while his pickup was parked at his apartment complex at 3035 N. Kentwood Ave., in the same area as the aforementioned incidents.

C.O. was at Midas, located at 1818 E. Saint Louis St., having his vehicle repaired. M.B. advised that he dropped his vehicle off at American Exhaust Pros, located at 1212 E. Trafficway St., in order to have it repaired.

In an attempt to match up the converters which were recovered from the car Griffith and Presley were contacted in, both seized converters were obtained from the Springfield Police Department's property room and transported to Midas. Upon arrival, the longer of the two converters was placed in the area where the converter had been removed from the Toyota Tundra. The cut marks in the metal pipes still attached to the Toyota Tundra were a perfect match to the cut marks on the unit recovered by officers from Presley and Griffith's vehicle.

In an attempt to match the second seized converter to M.B.'s vehicle, it was transported to American Exhaust Pros. Upon arrival it was learned that the converter had already been replaced, however, the businesses manager, D.O., was able to hold the second seized unit up to the undercarriage of M.B.'s Nissan Frontier, stating he was 100% certain it was cut from the undercarriage of the vehicle. He pointed out the similarities in the cuts in relation to the flange, and also provided me with the oxygen sensor wiring which they unplugged from the undercarriage of the vehicle. Upon comparing the wiring to the catalytic converter which was seized, it was determined that the four wires had the same colored casings as the wire protruding from the oxygen sensor mounted in the seized converter.



It was determined that, as a result of the theft of M.B.'s converter, he sustained a \$982.69 loss. As a result of the theft from C.O.'s vehicle, his company sustained a \$908.82 loss.

Based on the circumstances, it was clear that Griffith and Presley were driving around the area on the night in question stealing catalytic converters from beneath vehicles, having successfully removed the converters from C.O.'s company pickup and M.B.'s personally owned pickup.

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:

Griffith has a history of failing to appear:

- 08/14/2020: GCS Warrant #20-GRFTA-3383
- 08/14/2020: GCS Warrant #20-GRFTA-1794
- 05/21/2019: Warrant #180139431
- 03/26/2019: Warrant #180133647
- 02/13/2019: Warrant #180133647
- 10/09/2018: Warrant #160065256
- 11/01/2017: Warrant #170107107
- 07/20/2017: Warrant #170107107
- 12/14/2016: GCS Warrant #16-GRFTA-8342
- 10/26/2016: GCS Warrant #16-GRFTA-7231

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:

Griffith has a lengthy criminal history to include the following convictions:

- First Degree Tampering with Service of Utility (2002): Sentenced to 3 years confinement
- Forgery (2008): Sentenced to 3 years confinement
- Assault 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree – Subd 3 and 5 (2012): Sentenced to 30 days confinement
- First Degree Tampering with a motor vehicle (2013): Sentenced to 5 years confinement
- Felony Possession of a Controlled Substance (2013): Sentenced to 7 years confinement
- Felony Physically Take property from Victim (2013): Sentenced to 7 years confinement
- First Degree Tampering with a Motor Vehicle (2013): Sentenced to 7 years confinement
- Felony Receiving Stolen Property (2013): Sentenced to 7 years confinement
- Felony Resisting Arrest (2013): Sentenced to 7 years confinement
- First Degree Property Damage (2013): Sentenced to 7 years confinement
- First Degree Property Damage (2013): Sentenced to 7 years confinement
- Driving While Revoked (2019): Fine
- Unlawful Possession of Drug Paraphernalia (2019): Fine

Although Griffith has a lengthy criminal history, for which he was sentenced to confinement in the Department of Corrections, he continues to commit criminal acts against the citizens of the



community. The theft of catalytic converters has become a prolific issue not only in Greene County, but regionally, resulting in hundreds of thousands of dollars in losses. Between October 1, 2020 and February 1, 2021, over a four month period of time, citizens of Springfield who reported the theft of converters to police suffered a total monetary loss of over \$300,000. Non-Profit businesses suffered losses of over \$100,000 between January of 2020 and February of 2021. Although Griffith is not responsible for all of those losses, his actions have contributed to the ongoing victimization of the community, and it is believed that if his is released without sanctions in place, he will continue to victimize the members of this community without pause.

Not Applicable

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

/s/ Daniel Rankey	1105	Springfield, Mo. Police Detective - Property Crimes Unit
_____	_____	_____
Signature	DSN	Title