



DES PLAINES POLICE DEPARTMENT

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OFFICIAL PRESS RELEASE

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***** UPDATE*****

Yearlong Investigation Yields an Additional Arrest in 2023 Kidnapping Case

DES PLAINES, Illinois (March 22, 2024) – After a lengthy, complicated investigation, Des Plaines Investigators arrested and charged an additional subject tied to a kidnapping/armed Robbery that occurred on Feb. 10, 2023 at 622 E. Northwest Hwy. in Des Plaines.

The Des Plaines Police Department, in cooperation with the Cook County States Attorney's Office, charged the following subject with three counts of Aggravated Kidnapping and two counts of Aggravated Battery:

- Eric Grens – (33 years old) – 11317 Ballard Rd. Woodstock, IL 60098

Through phone forensics, investigators were able to identify Grens, as a significant participant in the crimes that occurred on Feb. 10, 2023, continuing into the morning of Feb. 11, 2023. Communications between Grens and a co-defendant were recovered. Specifically, Grens coordinating the kidnappings and gave instructions to take the victims to his residence in Woodstock. Grens told the same co-defendant to knock the victims' teeth out and make them feel like they are going to die. Additionally, Grens stated the victims should have been forced to sign over the titles of the vehicles associated with the business at 622 E. Northwest Hwy. in Des Plaines.

Additional physical evidence was recovered from Grens residence at 11317 Ballard Rd. in Woodstock when members of the Des Plaines Police Department executed a search warrant at this address on Feb. 20, 2023, shortly after the crime occurred. The physical evidence recovered, placed the victims at the residence and confirmed the fact that they were beaten badly in the early morning hours of Feb. 11, 2023. Grens was not at his home when the search warrant was executed.

On March 20, 2024, after a yearlong investigation that included executing multiple search warrants and awaiting the return of electronic and physical evidence, Grens was taken into custody in the parking lot of 250 N. Randall Rd. Lake in the Hills, IL by members of the Des Plaines Police Department.

He will be attending a detention hearing later today.

Two Subjects Charged in Kidnapping, Armed Robbery

DES PLAINES, Illinois (March 3, 2023) – Two suspects have been apprehended and charged in relation to a Kidnapping and Armed Robbery that occurred on February 10, 2023, at 622. E. Northwest Hwy. in Des Plaines.

Following an investigation by the Des Plaines Police Department, the following individuals were each charged with three counts of Aggravated Kidnapping and three counts of Armed Robbery:

- George P. Athanasakos – (24 years old) – 6N280 Elmwood Ave. Wood dale, IL 60191
- Brandon D. Bratcher – (27 years old) – 6300 Church Rd. Apt #314B, Hanover Park, IL 60133

Bratcher was additionally charged with one count of Residential Burglary.

On February 11, 2023, two male victims and one female victim, all adults, contacted the Des Plaines Police to report a kidnapping. They reported that they were taken from their car dealership, located at 622 E. Northwest Hwy., on the evening of February 10. Two of the victims own the dealership and the third victim is an employee. They alleged they were driven to a different location, where they were beaten, tortured, and restrained until the early morning hours of February 11, when they were returned to the car dealership. The victims stated that there were several offenders involved and they were attempting to embezzle money from the victims.

A subsequent investigation by Des Plaines Investigators learned that the victims, Athanasakos, and Bratcher knew each other through prior dealings with buying and re-furbishing vehicles. On the night of February 10th, the three victims and Bratcher were at the dealership when several masked offenders entered the dealership, armed with rifles and handguns. The victims were robbed of their personal belongings. The offenders then bound the victim's hands and feet, covered their heads, and forced them into a vehicle. The victims were driven to a different location where they were beaten repeatedly, burned with a hot metal object, and restrained throughout the evening. Both Athanasakos and Bratcher were positively identified by one of the victims during the incident. The victims were ultimately driven back to the car dealership the following morning and were told they had to pay the offenders a substantial amount of money and threatened violence if they did not pay.

Athanasakos was taken into custody on February 16, in Palatine, by Des Plaines Investigators.

Batcher was taken into custody on March 1, in Arlington Heights, by Des Plaines Police personnel.

Both Athanasakos and Bratcher are being held without bond after attending a bond hearing. After a thorough investigation by Des Plaines Police Investigators, we are confident that the victims were specifically targeted and there is no immediate threat to the general public.

For questions, contact Commander Matt Bowler at 847.391.6129

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Please remember that although a person may be charged with a crime, a charge is merely an accusation, and the person is innocent until proven guilty.

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