

ISP traffic stop leads to apprehension of three murder suspects

September 8 2016 4:47 PM



DANVILLE, IL – On August 27, 2016, at approximately 4:57 a.m., an Illinois State Police (ISP) District 10 Trooper observed two vehicles driving erratically in a road rage incident traveling eastbound on I-74 starting at milepost 200. The Trooper requested additional units. Officers in Vermilion County were able to assist. A traffic stop was initiated on both vehicles on I-74 eastbound near the Mile Post 214 exit ramp.

During the traffic stop, the Trooper suspected criminal activity by the subjects in both vehicles. The Trooper obtained consent to search one of the vehicles, a 2016 Charcoal Gray Jeep Wrangler, a rental vehicle with Canadian registration, and located a rifle. A K-9 conducted a free air sniff and alerted on the second vehicle, a 2014 White Mercedes C300, registered in Colorado. Officers searched the second vehicle and seized 112.1 grams of suspected cocaine and two handguns.

ISP District 10 Troopers also observed blood in both vehicles during their searches. Both vehicles were impounded to further the investigation.

The three occupants, Michael Gresham, 20, Joshua Baker, 20, and Lawrence Greggs Jr., 20, all from Cincinnati, Ohio, were arrested for weapon and drug offenses, incarcerated in the Vermilion County Jail, and held pending bond hearings.

ISP Agents contacted Colorado authorities regarding the Mercedes because the registered owner was not present. ISP Agents learned the registered owner of the Mercedes, Devon D. Smeltz, 21, was reported missing by his mother on Friday, August 26, 2016. Smeltz was found dead by Colorado authorities on Saturday, September 3, 2016. Gresham, Baker and Greggs were suspected of having a hand in the disappearance of Smeltz. All three suspects are being held in the Vermilion County Jail pending extradition by Colorado authorities.

“This is a perfect example of how a simple traffic stop can lead to the discovery of more serious crimes,” said ISP Colonel Tad Williams. “I am proud of the good police work by our Troopers and Agents involved in this investigation. Their teamwork with outside agencies and across state lines led to the seizure of illegal drugs, guns and ultimately resulted in the arrest of three dangerous criminals.”

This case remains an open and ongoing investigation by the Fort Collins, Colorado Police Department with the cooperation of the Illinois State Police. No further information is being released at this time.