

More charges served in Backpage robberies

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SOUTH ROXANA - The **South Roxana Police Department** has levied additional charges against two suspects regarding a Backpage robbery ring investigated by the **East Alton, Hartford** and South Roxana police departments.

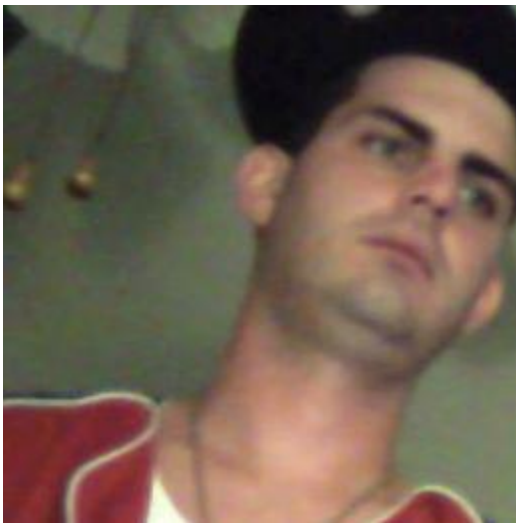
According to a release from **South Roxana Police Chief Bob Coles**, the South Roxana Police Department continued to follow leads pertaining to armed robberies, which were said to have occurred in the **200 block of Michigan Avenue** in reference to misleading ads allegedly placed on the website, **Backpage**. Three individuals were charged following that investigation, including **Antquello C. Young** and **Sierra Holman** of East Alton and **Nicholas L. Gansz** of South Roxana.

The release states the South Roxana Police Department was able to identify and locate additional victims, who failed to come forward after its last press release. Coles said he sent an officer to each alleged victim's home and "let the victim explain to their significant other their involvement in the case and why a South Roxana officer was knocking on their door."

"All of our victims have been cooperative with the process after making the initial contact," Coles said in the release. "We have confirmed three alleged robberies took place at **200 Michigan Avenue** and obtained the final charges today (Jan. 19, 2017)."

Both Young and Gansz were served with additional charges while remaining lodged in the Madison County Jail, according to the release. The additional charges include another count of armed robbery, a Class X felony while armed with a "dangerous knife", with a \$150,000 bond for Young, and an additional count of armed robbery for Gansz, a Class X felony while armed with a "dark colored revolver," with a \$200,000 bond.

Those additional charges stem from an investigation launched in November 2016 by the East Alton Police Department. In previous interviews with Riverbender.com, **Detective Christian Cranmer** of the **East Alton Police Department** said individuals seeking "female companionship" from a stranger on the website, Backpage went to a home in the 100 block of Victory Drive in East Alton, where they were allegedly robbed at gunpoint. Young and an alleged accomplice, Holman, were both residents of that address, Cranmer said.



During the investigation, Cranmer said more than a dozen people may have been victims of this couple, but only three went to police regarding the issue. Following the investigation by the East Alton Police Department, both Young and Holman were charged with several counts of armed robbery.

"When someone goes into a house for 'female companionship,' they sometimes aren't honest about what they may be doing, which leaves law enforcement in the dust," Cranmer said in a previous interview with Riverbender.com.

From Nov. 18, 2016, through late December, Cranmer said his department investigated three separate incidents with the same scenario. A break in the case came through the **Hartford Police Department**, which Cranmer said received a viable report from a witness who was able to give the police more details.

A release from the Hartford Police Department sent to Riverbender.com on Dec. 31, 2016, said police were contacted at 4:30 a.m. on Dec. 22, 2016, by a male victim who told police he was robbed at gunpoint. According to the release, the man was supposed to meet a woman from Backpage at a South Roxana residence. When the victim allegedly called the female he was supposed to meet to report he was lost near Route 111, he said he was approached by a female, one black male and one white male and robbed at gunpoint. Holman and Young were identified as suspects by police following that alleged robbery.

Cranmer said several belongings of other possible victims including driver's licenses, credit cards, debit cards and even a handgun were discovered during an execution of a search warrant at the Victory Drive residence.

A subsequent investigation led police to South Roxana. Coles said a search warrant was executed for Gansz's residence, but he was not home and no further evidence was found. He was arrested from his parents' home in Wood River on Jan. 6, 2017.