

Local car theft victim speaks out against rampant crime following Wood River vehicle thefts

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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WOOD RIVER - One local man is speaking out against the current car theft problem in the Riverbend, after himself being a victim of it.

Nathan Shaw, of Wood River, said his car was stolen last Tuesday, Jan. 9, from outside his home in Wood River and recovered the next day at the Alton Shop 'N Save. A report from Wood River Police Deputy Chief Dan Bunt said a vehicle left running in a driveway on the 500 block of 13th Street was stolen Wednesday, Jan. 10, at 5:25 p.m. and was subsequently recovered by the Alton Police Department on Thursday, Jan. 11 around 2 p.m.

Aaron Kelley, 24, of the 200 block of Main Street in Kane, Illinois, was charged by the Alton Police Department with offenses related to motor vehicles, a Class 2 felony.

Shaw said two other individuals were charged as well with heroin-related crimes, including possession of the substance and paraphernalia. Copies of those charges could not be obtained by Riverbender.com at this time, but officers from the Alton Police Department said such crimes may well be related to the opiate epidemic currently plaguing the country.

"Apparently are rampant, but being kept out of," Shaw said in an email. "My daughter could have been in her car seat. no way the thief checked before stealing my car. It was running. He jumped in - and gone. People should know that drug addicts from St. Louis and locally are targeting every area, including and especially very nice neighborhoods where it's considered safe.

"No doubt the opioid epidemic has increased these crimes to new levels. These criminals are being let back onto the streets to continue their life of crime almost immediately after being arrested. Do they need to kill someone first? seems so."

In reference to his personal issue, Shaw said Kelley and two other suspects were released before last weekend, and subsequently continued stealing cars.

In a release from the Wood River Police Department, Bunt said a second vehicle was stolen on Sunday, Jan. 14, at 4:54 p.m. from outside Petro Mart, located at 980 E. Ferguson in Wood River. Like Shaw's vehicle, that vehicle was left running - potentially due to the extreme cold temperatures experienced by the Riverbend.

The suspect in that theft was identified as Kelley, who has been subsequently charged with a second offenses related to a motor vehicle charge, which is still a Class 2 felony. Bond was set at \$73,000, but Kelley is not currently in custody.

Anyone with any information on Kelley's whereabouts is asked to contact the Wood River Police Department at (618) 251-3114.

The vehicle from then second theft has not been recovered. It is described as a white, 2001, Ford Expedition with Illinois license Z530475.

"If our prosecutors, judges police are soft on crime, let's find out," Shaw said. "I think our police are handcuffed personally. They arrest these scum worms weekly, only to see them turned loose."

[Dan Brannan also contributed to this story.](#)