

Driver Found Asleep After Godfrey Crash; Officers Find Drugs, Gun, Cash

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GODFREY - Authorities are seeking to take possession of more than \$5,000 from a man found asleep at the wheel after a traffic crash.

Documents alleged Lance R. Gardner, 32, of the first block of Mareta Place, Alton, was charged with unlawful possession with intent to deliver a controlled substance within 500 feet of a school and other offenses after the crash in the 2700 block of Godfrey Road, near St. Ambrose School.

While investigating the accident, deputies found Garnder asleep at the wheel, \$5,500 cash, a loaded .38-caliber handgun, and 17 baggies of suspected cocaine. Gardner told an officer he “sold a scooter and got birthday money” to get the cash.

The suspect then changed his story, and an officer said in a sworn statement that Lance could produce no evidence of being employed. The cash is considered drug money, which authorities can claim under a state law that provides for forfeiture of assets believed connected to the drug trade.

Gardner is charged with two counts involving between 15 and 100 grams of suspected cocaine, armed violence, and unlawful use of a weapon. The gun charges claim he possessed the gun near a school and that he possessed the gun while delivering illegal drugs. Bail is set at \$500,000. If convicted he could be sentenced to up to 30 years in prison.

A suit claiming the cash was filed Sept. 1; Gardner was charged Aug. 23; the suit was made public Tuesday.