

Undocumented Man Faces Stolen Vehicle, Weapon Charges In Madison County

by Dalton Brown, News Reporter
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EDWARDSVILLE - An undocumented 18-year-old was charged with weapon-related offenses and driving a stolen vehicle in Madison County, according to court documents.

Juan Carlos Benitez-Gomez, 18, of Kansas City, Mo., was charged with aggravated unlawful use of weapons, a Class 4 felony, and offenses related to motor vehicles, a Class 2 felony.

On Feb. 22, 2024, Benitez-Gomez allegedly carried a Smith and Wesson SW9G 9mm pistol in a stolen vehicle - the firearm was reportedly uncased, loaded, and immediately accessible at the time of the offense.

A petition filed to deny Benitez-Gomez's pretrial release describes the incident as follows:

"Defendant is charged with stealing a vehicle from Kansas City, Kansas, where he was residing at the time and claims he was en route back to Kansas City from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Inside the vehicle, located under the driver's seat, was a loaded and uncased handgun which defendant admitted that he was aware of."

The petition also states Benitez-Gomez is "not a United States citizen and is undocumented."

"Defendant is basically a transient and had no form of identification on his person at the time of his arrest. He admitted he is from Honduras," the petition states. "Defendant poses a serious risk of not appearing in court if released from custody and police are in the process of contacting immigration officials."

Benitez-Gomez's case was presented by the Metro East Auto Theft division of the Madison County Sheriff's Office. Court documents indicate he was remanded to jail until his initial appearance in court.

The issuance of charges is based solely upon probable cause and is not an indication of guilt. All subjects charged with criminal offenses are considered innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.