



Office of Mayor Lawrence J. Morrissey  
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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

**Walt Felton  
Lieutenant - Field Services**

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**DATE : August 10, 2015**

**Phone: 815-987-5744**

## **ARREST RELEASE**

On August 4th, 2015, shortly after 7:00am, Rockford Police received a report of a one-vehicle crash with injured persons on the Riverside Bridge and officers were dispatched. Due to their proximity to the crash, officers from the Loves Park Police also responded to the crash with injuries.

Officer arrived and found that a blue 2014 Dodge Avenger had struck the concrete bridge rail at the west end of the eastbound lanes. The car had caught fire, but that fire was extinguished by witnesses before police arrived. It was found that the car had held a driver and four passengers. All occupants were injured and two of the passengers were pronounced dead at the scene. Early in the investigation, it was discovered that the blue 2014 Dodge Avenger had been stolen some hours earlier from an address in Rockford.

Further investigation revealed that the driver was 21-year-old Michael A. Rankins, Jr. The deceased passengers were 18-year-old Kewan Nappier and a 16-year-old juvenile. The surviving passengers were 18-year-old Malcolm Owens and a 16-year-old juvenile. Rankins and the surviving passengers were transported to local hospitals for treatment.

After consultation with the Winnebago County State's Attorney's Office, the following charges were authorized:

Aggravated Driving Under the Influence of Alcohol / Accident Resulting in Death – 2 counts



Aggravated Driving Under the Influence of Alcohol Involving Great Bodily Harm  
Unlawful possession of Stolen Vehicle

On August 9th, 2015, Michael Rankins was released from the hospital. Rockford Officers were on hand to sever the arrest warrant at that time. Rankins was lodged in the Winnebago County Jail.

The charges against Rankins are accusations and he is presumed innocent unless proven guilty.

The investigation is ongoing. Anyone with information concerning the incident is encouraged to contact the Rockford Police Department (815)987-5824 or Rockford Area Crime Stoppers at (815) 963-7867.

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