



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

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

**Douglas Pann  
Assistant Deputy Chief**

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**DATE : June 20, 2016**

**Phone: 779-500-6635**

### **ARREST RELEASE**

On Saturday June 18, 2016 at and 9:45 p.m., Rockford Police Officers responded to Broadway and 6<sup>th</sup> Street for a reported auto theft. The victim of the auto theft reported he had given two women a ride to the area from a parking lot at 6300 E. State Street and, when they arrived at their destination, he stepped out of the vehicle and the women drove off in the victim's Subaru Outback. While an officer was on-scene investigating the theft complaint, Special Operations Group Officers located the stolen vehicle near 11<sup>th</sup> Street and Sandy Hollow Road. The officers, who were in an unmarked squad car, followed the vehicle to 11<sup>th</sup> Street and Harrison Avenue, at which point the driver accelerated away from them at a high rate of speed and turned southbound on Bildahl Street, which dead ends south of Reed Avenue. The vehicle struck a utility pole at the dead end. The driver, 29-year-old Amber Brannan of Rockford, was taken into custody near the scene of the crash, while another occupant, 24-year-old Kahyal Merrills of Rockford, fled on foot. Officers located Merrills hiding in a drainage ditch and took him into custody. A second female was never located.

During the follow-up investigation, Officers located a Ruger .357 Magnum where Merrills was hiding. Merrills was a previously convicted felon and the gun had been reported stolen in Rockford in January 2016. Officers also found suspected crack cocaine in the vehicle.

Merrills was lodged in the Winnebago County Jail on charges of Aggravated Unlawful Use of Weapons by a Felon, Aggravated Unlawful Use of Weapons, two counts of Possession of Stolen Property, and Resisting a Police Officer.



Brannan was lodged in the Winnebago County Jail on charges of Aggravated Driving While Revoked, Reckless Driving, and Violation of the Controlled Substances Act – Possession of Cocaine.

The charges against Merrills and Brannan are merely accusations and they should be considered innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

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