



J. HANLEY

WINNEBAGO COUNTY STATE'S ATTORNEY

PRESS RELEASE
September 23, 2026
State's Attorney J. Hanley

Winnebago County State's Attorney J. Hanley announces that the Honorable Judge Debra Schafer sentenced **Derek V. Wassilak (DOB: 6/12/1973)** to 12 years in the Illinois Department of Corrections for Possession of a Stolen Motor Vehicle, 15 years for Burglary and 7 years for Possession of a Controlled Substance. The defendant pled guilty to all three offenses in July. Wassilak will also be on mandatory supervised release for 18 months after he is released from prison. The sentences are to be served concurrently.

On August 4, 2025, Rockford Police Officers were dispatched to the 1800 block of 15th Avenue for a burglary from a business. The owner advised the lock on the gate, that secured the front of his property, had been cut and a box truck was missing. Police determined that the defendant, Derek Wassilak, took the vehicle. Police later located the truck parked outside a residence in the 1600 block of Broadway. They also found Wassilak, hiding inside the residence. Police found a bag inside the stolen box truck that had Wassilak's identification card and a plastic baggie of rock like substance that tested positive as methamphetamine.

Then, a few months later, on October 25, 2025, Winnebago County Sheriff's Police received a report of a stolen vehicle. The victim told police she was at the Hard Rock Casino with the defendant, Derek Wassilak, the night before, and when she woke up the next morning, her wallet had been stolen. She also noticed her car keys and her car were missing. Police reviewed surveillance footage from inside the Hard Rock Casino and could recognize the male with the victim at the time, was the defendant. The victim also identified Wassilak as the person she was with the night before at the Hard Rock.

The Rockford Police and Winnebago County Sheriff's Departments conducted the investigations in these cases. Assistant State's Attorney Jennifer Gadow handled the prosecution.

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