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## **Man from The Plains pleads guilty to his part in string of catalytic converter thefts**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**ATHENS, Ohio** – Less than a month after being released from prison, a man from The Plains has been sentenced to another prison term after pleading guilty to his part in a string of catalytic converter thefts.

Jonathan Westerviller, 34, pleaded guilty Tuesday in Athens County Common Pleas Court to a fifth-degree felony charge of complicity to theft. Judge George McCarthy imposed a prison sentence of nine months.

Westerviller was arrested on Sept. 17, three days after the crime was committed and only a week after he'd been released from prison after serving an 18-month sentence for theft of a motor vehicle.

James Howerton, 47, and Tyler Ball, 25, both of Nelsonville, were arrested along with Westerviller. Both are charged with breaking and entering (F5), grand theft (F4), possessing criminal tools (F5) and vandalism (F4). They are accused of breaking into Athens Transmission on Hebbardsville Road and stealing seven catalytic converters. Westerviller served as the getaway driver. Ball is under a \$50,000 bond while Howerton is scheduled to be arraigned on Oct. 21.

After being arrested, Westerviller tried to shift the blame to a third party but further investigation by the Athens County Prosecutor's Office and Athens County Sheriff's Office resulted in charges being dropped against the individual. Since then, additional arrests have been made in connection with more thefts of catalytic converters.

On Sunday, Oct. 4, deputies with the Athens County Sheriff's Office arrested David L. Willison, 45, of Chauncey, on charges of receiving stolen property (F5). Athens City Police officers arrested Robert Westerviller (Jonathan Westerviller's brother), 27, of The Plains, on charges of breaking and entering

(F5) and theft (F5). Cases against Robert Westerviller and Willison have not yet been indicted in Athens County Common Pleas Court.

“Assistant Prosecutor Zach Saunders is seeing to it that these criminals are paying the price for their actions in this string of catalytic converter thefts,” said Athens County Prosecutor Keller Blackburn. “Sheriff Rodney Smith and his deputies are doing an excellent job tracking down these thefts as are officers with the Athens Police Department. With all of our agencies working in concert, these criminal acts will be brought to justice.”

