

## **STOLEN AND RECOVERED A Buick Owner who Refused to Give Up!**

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On 5 August 2004, while away on vacation, someone arrived at Willie Wager's home in Monroe township, New Jersey around 3 a.m. and pushed his SUV out of the way to gain access to his 26' (or 9 metre)) box trailer which was loaded with tools and worst of all..... his show stopping 1971 GS 455 convertible which is all steel, fully streetable, red with a white top and interior.

These guys actually dragged the trailer across his front yard and made off with everything. What would you think on the odds on getting anything back - slim to none would be your best guess? Well Willie is one determined guy plus it helps to have some connections in the local law enforcement agencies.



Information was slow and seemed to be drying up until early November when Willie received a call from Camden, New Jersey Police Department that they had recovered his car abandoned in a vacant lot. He's happy to have it back but its missing tons of stuff. Motor - gone, trans - gone, rear - gone, front brake rotators - gone, GS hood - gone, '71 GS grille - broken, rear GSX spoiler and deck lid - damaged and broken.

On a brighter note, the top is intact, glass is unbroken, interior is pretty much complete, GS emblems all still intact. Bucket seats were unbolted but still in the car. Local hoodlums had spray painted their idiotic 'tags' all over the car including on the interior. Willie says it can be cleaned off. Besides the spray paint there were also a few dents in the body panels but nothing major. It's a start.

Soon after, while in his neighbourhood, he saw a local low life changing a rear end on a Chevelle. He thought this deserved a closer look. Willie went over when the guy wasn't around and recognised that it was his complete rear end that was being installed! A quick call to the police department and Willie recovered his rear end and one bad guy got locked up! He soon squealed, giving up names and locations which led police to a larger scale auto theft and

drug ring. Unfortunately leads went dry for Willie but he just kept up his determination with his friends in the local and state PD.

Another break came from a call from the Monroe PD in mid April of 2007, telling Willie that while on routine patrol, an officer pulled over a suspicious pick up which had a complete engine and transmission in the bed. That engine and transmission were from Willie's '71 GS! After getting his engine and trans back, Willie discovered that the engine was never used as it was all dusty and dirty. Seemed that the engine and trans were stored and never installed in a car! Needless to say more arrests followed after the recovery of the engine and transmission. The local and state PD are still working on the auto theft ring and hopefully Willie will recover his enclosed trailer.

What was now missing from Willie's GS was: transmission cross member, 455 frame pads and steel motor mounts, 1971 grille, GS hood, front drum brake assembly, engine harness from fire wall to the engine and lots of bolts - trans bolts, differential bolts for the suspension along with other assembly bolts.

Willie is extremely thankful for the outpouring help of the Buick community, as many of the needed parts were donated to Willie and the good news is this fall Willie's '71 GS convertible will be back 100%!

This is one amazing story as a pristine GS being snatched right from his house and two to three years later, has collectively been recovered. Some may say you have a better chance of winning Lotto!

*Article sourced by L M Haime (WA Buicks)*