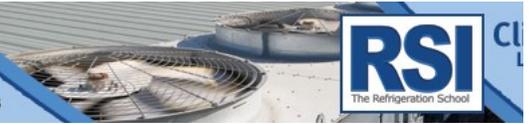




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### Ariz teen missing in Ore. on way back from Seattle

Posted: Aug 23, 2013 10:09 AM  
Updated: Aug 23, 2013 5:57 PM

MESA, Ariz. - Investigators are trying to find an Arizona teenager whose car was abandoned in southwest Oregon. He was headed back to Arizona after a trip to Washington, to start his first day of college this week. But he never made it.

Douglas County sheriff's spokesman Dwes Hutson says the [sport utility vehicle](#) driven by 18-year-old Johnathan Croom was found Wednesday in the small town of Riddle, not far from Interstate 5.

Monica Croom said Friday that her son was traveling alone on his way back from Seattle where he had visited a female friend.

She says he left Arizona on July 30 and was due to begin classes this past Monday at Mesa Community College.

Monica Croom says her son is "super smart" and has Boy Scout experience. She says his car didn't break down, wasn't out of gas and was unlocked with money inside.

David Croom, Johnathan's dad, traveled to Oregon after his son disappeared. He says it's an odd place to pull off the road.

A friend told David that Johnathan may have planned this.

"She said 'he had left to go on an adventure and I haven't been able to get ahold of him for two days,'" says Croom.

His father says Johnathan was intrigued by the movie "Into the Wild." It's about a young man who ventures out into the wilderness alone.

"He was talking to another friend that it would be great to just leave penniless and just work along the way and get resources like they did in the movie."

But the young man's family is worried he is not prepared to spend time in the wilderness.

"As far as we know he left in shorts and a T-shirt and a backpack with some socks in it and he left the car and that's all we know."

For now, his father is staying in Oregon, putting up missing posters around town, hoping someone somewhere will spot Johnathan, who could be in trouble.

"I'm just trying to stay busy and proactive and asking a lot of people to pray -- that's my way of coping," says David Croom.

The sheriff's spokesman says Croom's [SUV](#) wasn't vandalized and officers have searched the general area.

**Video:** FOX 10's Ty Brennan reports.

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