

Fourth OUI Conviction For Freetown Man Results in Jail Sentence

A 42-year-old repeat drunk driver from Freetown was convicted of multiple charges related to driving his ATV while heavily intoxicated last week in Fall River District Court and sentenced to serve two years in jail, Bristol County District Attorney Thomas M. Quinn III announced.

Daniel Szczepkowski was convicted at trial of Operating a Motor Vehicle Under the Influence of Liquor-fourth offense, operating a motor vehicle with a license suspended for an OUI, negligent operation of a motor vehicle, and failure to stop for police.

On September 11, 2014, the defendant drove his ATV to a corner store to buy beer. As he was leaving, an Freetown Police officer attempted to stop the defendant. The defendant failed to stop and continued driving for about a half mile. While the officer was following the defendant, the defendant was fishtailing in the road due to how fast he was driving. When the defendant finally arrived at his home, he accelerated and turned abruptly into the driveway, spinning the ATV 180 degrees.

The officer, who is familiar with the defendant, approached him and could immediately smell alcohol coming from the defendant. The defendant was swaying as well. The officer observed a beer bottle in a basket attached to the ATV. It was later discovered that there were three 40 oz. beers in the bag in the basket.

Due to the pursuit, the defendant's intoxication, and his history of resisting police, the officer decided to place the defendant under arrest. When the officer told the defendant he

was under arrest and instructed him to turn around and place his hands behind his back, the defendant complied. However, when the officer grabbed the defendant's arm, he pulled away and said "you're not arresting me." Based on the defendant's history, the officer drew his department issued Taser, at which point the defendant complied.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Gillian Kirsch. After the jury convicted the defendant, Assistant District Attorney Kirsch argued that based on the defendant's repeated history of driving drunk and attempting to elude police, he should be sentenced to the maximum sentence of two-and-a-half years in jail, to be followed by three years of supervised probation. The defense, however, recommended a one year commitment to jail and no probation.

District Court Judge Kevin Finnerty sentenced the defendant to two years in jail, to be followed by one year of supervised probation.

"I am pleased with the jury's verdict holding the defendant accountable for his fourth drunk driving offense," District Attorney Quinn said. "He is a menace to the public on the roadways and deserves the two year sentence imposed by the court."