

22-year-old Taunton Man Sentenced to State Prison

A 22-year-old Taunton man who fled the scene of an August 2018 traffic accident while in possession of an illegal firearm was sentenced to serve up to five-and-a-half years in state prison Wednesday in Fall River Superior Court, Bristol County District Attorney Thomas M. Quinn III announced.

Ward Tavares, Jr. pleaded guilty to a multi-count indictment, charging him with leaving the scene of property damage, carrying an illegal firearm with an obliterated serial number, operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license, carrying an illegal firearm and unlawful possession of ammunition.

On August 8, 2018, officers from the Taunton Police Department responded to 434 Weir Street for a report of a car accident. When officers arrived on scene, they saw that a Black BMW in the driveway of 434 Weir Street on top of a chain linked fence. The officers also learned that prior to damaging the chain link fence, the BMW struck a parked Ford SUV on Weir Street. Several civilians alerted the police that the sole occupant and operator of the BMW fled the scene without exchanging any information with the two property victims.

The police ran the registration of the BMW and found that it came back to the defendant. A witness later viewed a photographic array at the Taunton Police Station and identified Mr. Tavares as the operator of the BMW at the time of the accident. While towing the vehicle, police found a backpack inside the car, which contained a .45 caliber semi-automatic firearm with an obliterated serial number and eighteen loose bullets inside.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Jason Mohan and the four to five-and-a-half-year state prison

sentence was imposed by Judge Mark Hallal.

"This defendant was a convicted felon who had no business in possessing an illegal firearm. In addition, his license was suspended and he caused an accident in attempting to flee from the police," District Attorney Quinn said. "This defendant is a danger to the community and needs to be kept off the street. Hopefully, this sentence will protect the public."