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Driver Who Led Chase Receives Prison Time

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ALLIANCE — Wednesday morning in Box Butte District saw 30-year-old Ryan Riddle of Greeley, Colorado, sentenced to 12-18 months with the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services for operating a motor vehicle to avoid arrest, a Class IV felony, and an infraction of speeding.

On Jan. 9, Riddle led law enforcement officials on a high-speed chase going into fields and pastures through barbed wire fences. A trooper with the Nebraska State Patrol first attempted to affect a stop on Riddle's vehicle because of excessive speed — 58 miles per hour in a 45 zone. The chase began on the outskirts of Alliance,



Ryan Riddle

and led into Sheridan County before Riddle was taken into custody at Hay Springs, three days later.

In exchange for pleading to the Box Butte County charges, an infraction of possession of marijuana was dismissed in a Sheridan County case against Riddle, and a Cheyenne County case was dismissed.

However, Riddle was still convicted of a Class I misdemeanor of theft by receiving between \$200 and \$500 in Sheridan County. The charge states he was in possession

of a computer valued at \$399, knowing or believing it had been stolen. He was ordered to pay courts costs of \$49, and sentenced to 60 days in jail with credit of 61 days.

Prior to Wednesday's sentencing, Box Butte County Attorney Kathleen Hutchinson said Riddle's actions turned into a "crime spree incident" once he crossed the border from Colorado into Nebraska. Hutchinson pointed out Riddle had

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almost no record as a juvenile, but a lengthy criminal history as an adult.

Defense Attorney Jon Worthman said Riddle was not a candidate for probation, and did not request it, as Riddle had already been in jail for over 130 days. Worthman further added Riddle "made a mountain out of a molehill" by running rather than simply stopping the vehicle.

Riddle, speaking on his behalf, said he has made mistakes but learned from them. He added he would like to be with his wife — who was also involved in the chase and present in the courtroom — through the remainder of her pregnancy, and he has a strong support system, demonstrated by several letters sent by family members to the Court.

Judge Travis O'Gorman said Riddle put people in danger with his choices, and put a lot of fear into the community when the chase was happening. He was hopeful Riddle would make better choices after he gets out.

Riddle was given 136 days credit for time served, and is eligible for parole in six months. Additionally, he was charged \$75 for the speeding charge.

Also in District Court, Sebastian C. Scott, 31, Alliance, was sentenced to two

years probation for second-offense driving under the influence (high blood-alcohol content or refusal), a Class I misdemeanor amended from a third offense, a Class IIIA felony. He pleaded no contest on the charge in March. Further charges of leaving the scene of an accident, a Class II misdemeanor, and refusal of a preliminary breath test, a Class V misdemeanor, were dismissed.

The charge stems from an Aug. 2 incident, but prior to sentencing Hutchinson provided valid evidence of a prior offense on April 22, 2004, in Box Butte County Court, making the August incident a second offense.

Hutchinson said she believes Scott understands his drinking leads to making bad choices. As he chose not to put the State through a full trial, she said the mandatory minimum sentence would be sufficient, and she was not opposed to probation.

Scott appeared without counsel, having recently fired his attorney because he did not want to incur any more fees.

Judge O'Gorman agreed with Hutchinson, that Scott's drinking leads him to do some "not so great things." As part of the probation, Scott must serve 30 days in Box Butte County Jail, with one day credit. However, the judge allowed Scott to decide when he would serve that time, though it must be within the first year of probation.

Scott was also ordered to have 180 days of continuous alcohol monitoring, attend anger management classes and Moral Reconciliation Therapy® (MRT), and be subject to random drug and alcohol testing. Additionally, he was fined \$1,000 and his license is revoked five years.

Receiving a similar sentence was Edward A. Hitchcock, 39, Alliance.

Originally charged with third-offense driving under the influence (high blood-alcohol content or refusal), a Class IIIA felony, Hitchcock pleaded guilty to a second offense of the charge, which stems from a Sept. 28 incident, in April. A prior offense from Oct. 28, 2008, was deemed valid.

Hitchcock was sentenced to two years probation on the charge. He must also serve 30 days in the county jail — with three days credit — within the first year of the probation, attend inpatient treatment and do 180 days of continuous alcohol monitoring. He was fined \$1,000 and his license is revoked five years.

Hutchinson noted Hitchcock has already been to treatment more than once, and is hopeful this time it will stick. She also pointed out Hitchcock has successfully completed probation in the past.

Worthman said Hitchcock has a lot going for him, and needs to make a decision. Should he decide to do things that will land him in the courtroom again, there will be no chance of probation. Worthman noted Hitchcock was already setting up for admittance into treatment program.

Judge O'Gorman said it is clear Hitchcock is "at the end of the line," and received a

plea deal others might not get. He encouraged the defendant to make good with the opportunity he's been given.

Cheryl A. Vasquez, 38, Alliance, was placed on two years administrative probation for attempted misrepresentation in obtaining state assistance greater than \$500, a Class I misdemeanor lessened from a Class IV felony of misrepresentation in obtaining state assistance greater than \$500. She pleaded no contest to the charge in March.

The amended charge states Vasquez took a substantial step between June 1, 2011, and Oct. 31, 2012 to obtain, attempt to obtain or aid in obtaining public assistance benefits of \$4,479 in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program payments and \$3,774 in Aid to Dependent Children payments, through false representation.

Hutchinson waived commenting, though Worthman noted there was an underlying issue in the case as to whether fraudulent statements were made. He said Vasquez wants to have the case behind her, and would not contest any restitution. Worthman further added Vasquez should not be incarcerated due to several upcoming back surgeries.

Judge O'Gorman said incarceration was not appropriate due to Vasquez's med-

ical issues, but it was important she make \$3,774 restitution.

Two probable cause hearings were scheduled in cases involving possible probation violations.

In February, 31-year-old Isaac Picket Pin Jr. was sentenced to two years intensive supervision probation for Class IV felonies of possession of a short shotgun and terroristic threats.

According to the charges, between May 23 and 24, 2013, Picket Pin pointed an H & R Pardner Pump 20 gauge shotgun with a 17.25-inch barrel at Jesse L. Hernandez and Joshua J. Hernandez. The shotgun was described as having a sawed-off barrel and stock, and was found after a search warrant executed at Picket Pin's residence.

In June 2008, Alden W. Pumpkin Seed, 40, Lincoln, was sentenced to five years of intensive supervision probation, 180 days in the county jail and fined \$1,000 on a charge of fourth offense driving under the influence over .15, a Class IV felony. He was originally charged with fifth-offense driving while intoxicated over .15, a Class II felony. However, one of the alleged prior offenses could not be proven at sentencing.

Both suspects are accused of violating their respective probations, with probable cause hearings scheduled for June 24.