



NEWS RELEASE
GREENE COUNTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEY
DAN PATTERSON

Contact: Kimberly Haynes, Assistant Office Manager – (417) 868-4061
1010 Boonville
Springfield, MO 65802

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

“SOVEREIGN CITIZEN” PLEADS GUILTY ON DAY OF TRIAL

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – Greene County Prosecuting Attorney Dan Patterson announces that on October 29, 2014, John F. Gibson, 61, of Willard, Missouri, entered a guilty plea to felony forgery for transferring a forged money order to People’s Bank in Springfield, Missouri. Mr. Patterson wants to publicly thank the manager of People’s Bank for cooperating with the prosecution and not succumbing to Gibson’s attempts to harass and bully his way out of responsibility for his criminal conduct.

Gibson was charged with felony forgery in February of 2011 for events that occurred in December of 2010. Gibson created a money order on his personal computer falsely stating that it was to be paid by the United States Treasury. Gibson then presented the forged money order to People’s Bank to pay a debt his son owed. Gibson identifies himself as a “sovereign citizen” and claimed that he had authority to create this money order as a United States citizen.

Gibson entered a guilty plea before the Honorable Calvin Holden on the morning of the jury trial without any plea agreement with the State. In an unusual proceeding, Gibson only entered his guilty plea after Judge Holden indicated to Gibson that he would likely receive a suspended imposition of sentence. Gibson then entered an “Alford” plea under which he did not take responsibility for his conduct or admit to the conduct charged but instead only admitted there was sufficient evidence to convict him if he went to trial. The Court then proceeded to sentencing without ordering the usual sentencing assessment report by probation and parole.

The State argued that Gibson should at least be placed on five years of supervised probation based upon his prior criminal history which includes a 2006 misdemeanor harassment conviction for threatening to place a levy upon the property of

Subject: Greene County Prosecuting Attorney Press Release, State v. Gibson, 1131-CR00939-01

Greene County Circuit Judge Dan Conklin. Judge Holden did not follow the State's recommendation and instead suspended the imposition of sentence and placed Gibson on unsupervised probation for two years. If Gibson successfully completes the probation period, his guilty plea will not be considered a conviction under Missouri Law.

While Gibson's attempt to pass a forged money order may not seem particularly newsworthy, it is important that the public be aware of the sovereign citizen movement and the danger posed by the movement. Sovereign citizens consist of many loosely associated groups that are located throughout the country. Their beliefs vary widely, but they all share the common belief that the government lacks legitimate authority. Many times individuals involved with sovereign citizens groups intentionally act in a manner to subvert government authority and try to harm those who they view as assisting the government by, among other things, filing false liens against them.

In this case, Gibson and his associates retaliated against the People's Bank manager for her cooperation with the State by bringing fake criminal charges against her in a fictitious court. A sovereign citizens group in Taney County operating the fictitious "International Environmental Court" charged the bank manager with violating environmental laws and issued a finding that the bank manager was guilty. Gibson filed a copy of the bogus documents with the Greene County Circuit Court Clerk's Office on the day of his guilty plea. That matter is currently under investigation.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Kevin Young. It was investigated by the Greene County Sheriff's Office and Detective Scott Britton was the lead investigator assigned to the case.

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