



NEWS RELEASE
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03/28/2014

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WOMAN SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR STEALING CAR WITH CHILDREN INSIDE

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – Greene County Prosecuting Attorney Dan Patterson announces that Cynthia D. Brown, 38, of Springfield, MO was sentenced yesterday for stealing a car with two small children inside. The incident occurred in March 2013 and resulted in an Amber Alert and a city-wide search for the missing children. Ultimately, both children were recovered in good condition.

On March 3, 2013, the children's father, Jerry Blue, took his children to run errands. He left the children in his vehicle while he ran into a local grocery store. He also left the keys in the ignition. Blue was only in the store for a few minutes when he returned to the parking lot to see the defendant enter his vehicle and drive off the lot. Both children were still inside the vehicle. The defendant was driving erratically and side-swiped a parked car and then left the scene of that accident. She then dropped the toddler off in a residential neighborhood. The 4 year old was found approximately 30 minutes after he had been taken. He approached a woman in the 800 block of South Newton and asked if he could stay with her. He told the woman that the defendant had taken him and his sister. He told the witness that the defendant dropped him off but "kept" his sister. That witness immediately alerted the authorities.

The 14 month old child was located almost seven hours after her brother had been found. She was found in the abandoned car in the parking lot of an apartment complex on West Mount Vernon Street. Officers who arrived on scene noted that the temperature was only 29 degrees Fahrenheit and that the car was covered in frost. Despite the temperature and the amount of time she was alone, she was unharmed. After investigation, it was determined that the defendant was not aware there were children in the vehicle when she stole the car. She discovered the children in the backseat only after she had driven away from the grocery store.

Subject: Greene County Prosecuting Attorney Press Release, State v. Brown, 1331-CR03076-01

The defendant pled guilty on November 22, 2013 to two counts of endangering the welfare of a child in the first degree for abandoning the children, tampering in the first degree for stealing the vehicle, and leaving the scene of an accident. At that time, the defendant was found to be a prior and persistent felony offender with convictions for possession of a controlled substance and driving while intoxicated with a child under 15 years of age.

The Honorable Thomas Mountjoy sentenced the defendant to 10 years in the Missouri Department of Corrections for each conviction of endangering the welfare of a child in the first degree, 10 years in the Missouri Department of Corrections for the conviction of tampering in the first degree, and 180 days in the Greene County Jail for the conviction of leaving the scene of an accident. Probation was denied. The sentences are to run concurrently to each other and all existing sentences for a total of 10 years. Prior to deciding his sentence, Judge Mountjoy heard arguments from the prosecutor and the defense. The prosecutor requested a sentence of 10 years in the Missouri Department of Corrections. The State noted the severity of the crimes and the manner in which the defendant callously and dangerously abandoned the children. The State further noted that the defendant had options, like calling 911 or leaving the children with a trusted authority, but chose to abandon the children in an effort to conceal her crime. The defense requested that the defendant be sentenced to either the 120 day treatment program in the Department of Corrections or the 1 year treatment program in the Missouri Department of Corrections. The defense argued that the defendant had a drug and alcohol problem, and simply needed treatment. Judge Mountjoy agreed that the defendant had a drug and alcohol problem, but given that she was committing crimes that endangered children, she should not be afforded leniency. Judge Mountjoy also sentenced the defendant to prison terms on several unrelated crimes of stealing, assault in the third degree, burglary in the second degree, sexual misconduct in the second degree and resisting arrest.

The Greene County Prosecutor's Office urges all those who are responsible for caring for children to never leave children alone in a vehicle, even if for a few minutes of time. As demonstrated by this case, it can take just a matter of moments for something terrible to happen when children are left unsupervised in vehicles. Luckily, due to the work of the Springfield Police Department and the good citizens of Greene County, these children were recovered unharmed.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Stephanie Wan. It was investigated by the Springfield Police Department and Detective Steve Ramey was the lead investigator assigned to the case.

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