

# **Man who swam across Illinois River to Kampsville after pursuit receives long sentence**

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
August 3 2018 4:29 PM



**HARDIN** - A Cape Girardeau, Mo., man was sentenced to 11 years by a Calhoun County Circuit Court judge for multiple charges, stemming from an Aug. 1, 2017, incident.

Jesse Dorris was involved in the much-publicized case in which he swam across the Illinois River bank just past Eldred in Greene County to Kampsville during a long law enforcement pursuit.

On May 25, 2018, Dorris, 48, from Cape Girardeau, Missouri, was sentenced by Calhoun County to 11 years in the Illinois Department of Corrections. The sentence was pronounced by The Honorable Judge J. Frank McCartney.

Dorris had pleaded guilty on March 22, 2018, to a charge of Possession of a Stolen Vehicle, a Class 2 Felony, and a charge of Reckless Conduct, a Class A Misdemeanor. This was part of a partially-negotiated, open plea.

The Calhoun County Sheriff's Office said the story for the charges went like this:

"The incident that took place on Aug. 1, 2017, spanned four counties. The Jerseyville Police Department had attempted to stop Dorris, but he fled northbound from Jerseyville into Carrollton. At that point, the Carrollton Police Department and the Greene County Sheriff's Office began pursuit. Dorris fled at a high rate of speed, westbound on Illinois Route 108 towards the Kampsville Ferry.

"Calhoun County Sheriff Bill Heffington then left Hardin, and went northbound on Eldred Road, in an attempt to stop the suspect vehicle if it had gone southbound. Upon arrival to the ferry, Dorris drove the vehicle off the landing ramp and crashed it into the Illinois River. Dorris then swam across the river, while also holding onto the side of the Kampsville Ferry while in the water.

"Dorris then fled on foot into a campground in Kampsville, and unlawfully took possession of a citizen's Ford F150. Law Enforcement Officers from Greene County had now been brought across the river by a citizen in a boat who wanted to help the police. The officers attempted to remove Dorris from the truck, and stop him from fleeing. Dorris, then backed the truck up in an erratic manner and struck one of the officers.

"One of the officers was able to disable one of the truck's tires by firing his duty pistol. Dorris then fled northbound on Route 100 from Kampsville at a high rate of speed, driving on three tires and one rim. Two of the Greene County Officers then got into the patrol vehicle of a Calhoun County Deputy Sheriff, and they pursued Dorris northbound, following the rim marks in the road.

"Officers from the Pike County Sheriff's Office and Sheriff Paul Petty himself then joined the pursuit. Dorris was continuing eastbound on Route 106 towards the Florence Bridge in Pike County. Sheriff Petty was aware of a construction zone up ahead and knew the chase had to be stopped immediately. A Pike County deputy then executed a maneuver to force Dorris off the roadway. Dorris was then arrested without incident."

This type of plea negotiation was reached between Calhoun County State's Attorney Richard Ringhausen and Dorris' attorney, in which Dorris pleaded guilty with an agreement of a certain range of possible penalties. The agreed maximum sentence was 11 years. The Honorable Judge McCartney had that range of penalties at his discretion at the sentencing hearing, which was held on May 25, 2018, in Calhoun County.

The maximum possible penalty of 11 years was given by Judge McCartney. The minimum penalty could have been probation.

Calhoun County Sheriff Heffington said: "This was a team effort of several law enforcement agencies to stop a life-threatening situation. A very big thank you to Pike County and Sheriff Petty. A very big shout out to all the police agencies in Greene County, our neighbors to the east, Calhoun County is thankful for everything you did that day.

"Special thank you to Greene County Chief Deputy Sheriff Cale Hoseman, White Hall Assistant Police Chief Eddie Ford, and Greenfield Police Chief John Goode...I think we will all remember this one for quite some time."

Dorris also had felony charges in Pike County and Greene County.

"I am always happy when the court system takes a tough stance on serious crime," Sheriff Heffington said.