

Defendant Had Unusual Training Method: Jury Finds Man Guilty Of Possession Of Stolen Motor Vehicle

by Sanford Schmidt

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EDWARDSVILLE - A defendant in a stolen car and gun trial told an officer that he was jogging along Interstate 255 in the dark during a rainstorm because he was “training for a fight,” a prosecutor said Monday in her opening statement.

Tathony M. Brown, 26, of Brooklyn Park, Minn., was charged with aggravated possession of a stolen motor vehicle and unlawful possession of a weapon by a felon.

Assistant State's Attorney Cara Tegel told the jury that the 2016 Lincoln MKX went missing from a residence in St. Louis County on April 21.

A jury was deliberated to late Tuesday night and found the defendant guilty of possession of a stolen motor vehicle and not guilty of possession of a firearm.

Tegel said the defendant was involved in three different high-speed chases between Missouri and Interstate 255 near Pontoon Beach, where the Lincoln crashed in a ditch. The Metro East Auto Theft Task Force conducted an investigation and brought the case to the Madison County State's Attorney's Office. A charging document claims Brown knew the vehicle and that it was worth more than \$25,000.

Brown has a previous conviction for tampering with a vehicle from St Louis County. Bail has been set at \$75,000.

Tegel said officers spotted an object being tossed from the fleeing vehicle, and the impact caused sparks to fly she said. Later, officers found a magazine loaded with 9 mm bullets, a Rugger 9 mm handgun, and \$252.

After the crash, two men bolted from the vehicle. One of them, possibly a passenger, was caught. Brown was stopped jogging along the Interstate minutes later. He was covered in mud and grass stains, apparently from the area of the crash, Tegel said.

When arrested, Brown refused to give his name and became combative, Tegel said. Police later identified him from a credit card in his possession.

The passenger was able to identify the driver. In the leadup to the trial, Circuit Judge Kyle Napp interrupted Brown's arraignment because of his violent behavior in court. He ruled that, if he misbehaved again, the arraignment would be held without his presence.

Brown, representing himself, told the jury he was not the driver, and he was not aware that it was stolen, He said there was no hard evidence to connect him to the Lincoln. He claimed the passenger was lying to protect himself.