

Man who possessed Taser without license enters plea

Lisa Roose-Church, and Lisa Roose-Church, Livingston Daily 2:04 p.m. EDT June 15, 2015



(Photo: Livingston County Jail)

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A 33-year-old West Virginia man has entered a plea to misdemeanor charges following a traffic stop that revealed he was carrying a Taser without the proper license.

Frederick Joseph Butcher was initially charged with felony possession of a Taser without a license, but that was reduced to a misdemeanor possession of a switchblade in a plea deal that also called for him to plead guilty as charged to having no insurance, an unregistered vehicle and improper plates.

"I'm sorry," Butcher said at a plea hearing in Livingston County Circuit Court in Howell on Friday. "I did not know the Taser was illegal. I know I was driving illegal, but I didn't know the taser was."

Possession of the Taser is legal in West Virginia, authorities said. However, in Michigan, the Penal Code and Firearms Act was amended to allow for possession and reasonable use of Tasers by Michigan concealed pistol license holders, according to information from the Michigan State Police.

Judge Miriam Cavanaugh immediately sentenced Butcher to 27 days in the Livingston County Jail, which is time he has already served. She also ordered that he pay fines and costs totaling about \$300.

The prosecutor's office asked Cavanaugh to order forfeiture on the Taser, which prompted Butcher to tell the court to keep both 2000 Pontiac Sunfire he was driving and the Taser.

"I don't want the car of the taser back; it just gets me in trouble," Butcher said.

Butcher was driving the Sunfire south on U.S. 23 near Faussett Road in Tyrone Township on May 16 after dropping off his girlfriend's sister in Cadillac. He said he was heading to Ohio to find work because there are no jobs in West Virginia after a coal mine closed.

A Michigan State Police trooper stopped the Sunfire for improper registration. During that stop, the trooper found a pink PHX 800 ultra-high-voltage Taser in the center console.

Butcher acknowledged the plate on the car belonged to his sister's Ford Escape.

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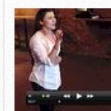
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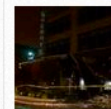
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