

EXCLUSIVE: Waukesha County Court Commissioner Lets Accused Eighth Time Drunk Driver Free On \$5,000 Bond
By Mark Belling, WISN-AM

In the latest instance of disgracefully low bail set by a Waukesha County Court Commissioner in an OWI case, Court Commissioner Linda Saafir has freed an Oak Creek man charged with his eighth OWI offense after the man was forced to produce only \$5,000 in cash bail.

Carl Nelson, 61, was arrested last week in Menomonee Falls when a police officer spotted him driving around 6:45 in the morning on I-41. Nelson's vehicle was carrying a number of 100-pound propane tanks and the complaint states they were moving around the back of the truck and were unsecured. The complaint states Nelson admitted driving to Crivitz in northern Wisconsin to buy the propane and stopping in Green Bay to drink the night before.

Nelson could not remember when he left Crivitz, according to the complaint. His breath test came back at 0.17, more than double the level for presumptive evidence of intoxication. The complaint also states he had an open beer in the vehicle. Nelson does not have a valid driver's license nor a license to transport hazardous materials.

Nelson has been around this block before. His most recent OWI conviction, his seventh, came in 2014 and he was sentenced to three years in prison. The rest of his drunk driving convictions are scattered through his life.

Saafir, the court commissioner, set the low bond but ordered Nelson not to consume alcohol or drive. I have reported repeatedly on the tendency of Waukesha County court commissioners to set extremely low bail in cases of chronic drunk drivers. One of those individuals ended up being involved in a fatal accident on I-94 several years ago when his vehicle hit a driver who had pulled over to help another motorist.

Nelson's next court appearance isn't until May. Until at least then, he's free. He's not supposed to drink and/or drive but that hasn't stopped him in the past.

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