

Washington County Elects An Evers-Appointed Judge; Here's The Frightening Result

By Mark Belling, WISN-AM

A West Bend man who fled from Washington County Sheriff's deputies at 125 miles per hour before crashing his car has been released from custody without having to put up a single penny in bail.

The judge, Ryan Hetzel, who freed the 17-year old accused felon was appointed a Washington County judge by Governor Tony Evers but was reelected to a full term last spring by county voters despite the fact that he was opposed by a lawyer running as a judicial conservative.

Dresden Fritsch, 17, of West Bend was convicted of first offense drunk driving in November. Only two months later, according to reports, he was spotted Saturday January 27 on I-41 driving at a slow rate of speed. When a sheriff's deputy attempted to pull him over, Fritsch allegedly sped off at 125 miles per hour. He crashed his car while unable to navigate a turn.

Assistant Washington County District Attorney Jeannette Corbett tells me at Dresden's initial appearance Monday she requested \$5,000 cash bail. But Hetzel rejected the request for cash bail and instead let Fritsch off on a signature bond. Signature bonds do not require you to put up any cash at all. Hetzel's action came despite the fact that Fritsch is now facing two new felonies. He also has no driver's license as a result of his drunk driving conviction in November.

Milwaukee County is facing an epidemic of chases because drivers are aware there are usually no consequences for running from the police and driving without a license. The same situation now appears to be kicking in in Washington County. The county, the most Republican in the state of Wisconsin, nonetheless has three of its four circuit judges being Democrat appointees. Regardless of who a governor appoints voters eventually can decide at election who to put in the judgeship for a full term. Washington County voters reelected Hetzel. In other words, the voters got exactly what they should have expected when electing an Evers-appointed judge.

Fritsch's next court appearance isn't until late March. In the meantime, he is free to do whatever he wants on local roads.

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