



Muskingum County Prosecutor's Office

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Newark woman sentenced to prison for man's death

A Newark woman was sentenced to prison Monday for complicity in her boyfriend's death in a high-speed crash by encouraging him to flee from police.

In early April, 25-year-old Brittany Belcher was in the passenger seat of a car driven by 37-year-old Robert Hunter, also from Newark.

Fazeysburg Police Chief Eli Bourne did a routine license plate check on the vehicle driven by Hunter. Bourne followed the vehicle a short distance. Hunter immediately pulled off into a gas station parking lot and then exited back on to the roadway, where he rapidly accelerated to speeds in excess of 55 mph in a 25 mph zone.

His driving became more reckless as the pursuit continued on Raiders Road, with the defendant traveling faster than 110 mph and passing cars in no-passing zones.

Knowing a sharp turn was coming up at the intersection of Dresden Road, Chief Bourne slowed down, but Hunter did not. Hunter went left of center into an embankment, sending the car airborne and ejecting both occupants through their windows.

Belcher survived the crash, but Hunter was pronounced dead at Genesis Hospital. When questioned, Belcher admitted to investigators that she was encouraging Hunter to flee. Belcher further admitted to hiding a meth pipe in her vagina during the pursuit.

"Complicity" is a form of guilt under Ohio law where a person who is not the primary (or main) wrongdoer faces criminal consequences due to their encouragement or assistance, and participation in the crime by a word, act, or deed.

In this case, Belcher and Hunter had repeatedly fled from law enforcement officers in other counties, and had repeatedly escaped due to "pursuit policies" which required those agencies to let them get away.

When interviewed by police, Belcher said she advised Hunter to keep going during the pursuit because she did not want him to go to jail. Her pleas to Hunter to continue driving at reckless speeds ultimately contributed to the crash that caused him to die.

Belcher pleaded guilty to involuntary manslaughter, a first-degree felony, and was sentenced to three to four-and-a-half years in prison.