

Motorcyclist arrested after chase through county ends in crash, woman injured

Written by Marty Randall

Wednesday, 22 May 2013 07:28 - Last Updated Wednesday, 22 May 2013 07:29

Charges have been filed in Scott Circuit Court against a Jeffersonville motorcyclist after he allegedly led officers on a high speed chase in Scott County early in the morning on Thursday, May 9.

Patrick J. Mantia, 26, was treated for injuries after his motorcycle crashed on State Road 203 near a stone quarry and then arrested and taken to the Scott County Security Center.

Mantia and a passenger, identified as Ashley Vernon, 24, were both hurt in the crash, Vernon's injuries described as very serious.

She was flown by medical helicopter from the scene to University of Louisville Hospital. Vernon suffered what was described as a severe head injury after being thrown from the motorcycle during the crash.

Mantia, formerly of Scott County, was allegedly seen by Deputy Rex Herald just after 12 midnight operating a motorcycle at high speeds on U.S. Highway 31.

The deputy's radar reading on the motorcycle was 82 mph as it headed south. He explained in the probable cause affidavit that he turned his patrol car around and attempted to catch up to the motorcycle to make a traffic stop.

Even after activating his red-and-blue emergency lights and his siren, Deputy Herald reported the motorcycle continued to flee from him. He followed the motorcycle on U.S. 31 from near Coffee Pot Curve, down Marshfield Road just north of Scottsburg and onto Slab Road heading toward State Road 56 East.

The cycle turned east onto S.R. 56 after reaching speeds from 65 to 120 mph, the affidavit related.

Sgt. Steven Herald and Patrolman James Vires of the Scottsburg Police Department were near Scottsburg's downtown square and joined the pursuit. At times, the bike swerved into the westbound lane of S.R. 56, the officers reported but, fortunately, did not meet any on-coming traffic.

As the motorcycle neared the S.R. 56/S.R. 203 intersection, the Scottsburg officers took the lead in the pursuit. The motorcycle "...continued to accelerate until it came to the curve prior to Smith Road, where the driver lost control and the bike rolled several times. The driver and passenger were thrown from the bike and landed on the roadway..." a portion of the affidavit read.

Though Vernon remained motionless, Mantia reportedly began running away on foot. He was captured by Deputy Herald and Ptl. Vires after 50 yards from the scene. The man allegedly fought both officers, who finally got him under control.

While Scott County EMS technicians attended to Vernon while awaiting the medical helicopter, a backpack she was carrying was cut away from her. The backpack, officers discovered, contained night vision apparatus as well as several flashlights and what Deputy Herald described as "...other items which appeared to be burglary tools..."

Ptl. Vires accompanied Mantia on his ambulance ride to Scott Memorial Hospital for treatment of his injuries.

A check of Mantia's driving license showed that it was suspended. His wallet contained \$4,055

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in cash, the report revealed.

Deputy Herald also received information from the helicopter medical crew that Vernon had was described as "...a large amount..." of suspected narcotics and drug paraphernalia on her person. A deputy with the Clark County Sheriff's Department later went to U of L Hospital, obtained that evidence and transported it to Deputy Herald.

A check by the Scott County Sheriff's Department on May 9 indicated that Vernon had suffered a broken clavicle as well as internal bleeding in her brain. No current information on her physical condition was available.

Mantia has already has his initial hearing in Circuit Court regarding the current charges filed against him. He is charged with fleeing law enforcement resulting in bodily injury, a Class C felony, as well as Class A misdemeanors of resisting law enforcement, reckless driving and driving while his license is suspended.

A not guilty plea was entered for him on Monday, May 13, and bond was set at \$100,000 corporate surety/full cash. At a review hearing set by Judge Roger Duvall for Friday, May 17, Mantia told Judge Duvall that he intends to hire an attorney.

Chief Deputy Prosecutor Chris Owens also filed a state's petition for detainer and/or greater than standard bond. Mantia is being held for 15 days without bond with his bond afterward remaining at \$100,000. Mantia was on probation in another criminal matter at the time of the motorcycle chase, according to records from the Scott County Probation Department.

Charges in Scott Superior Court were filed against Vernon by the Prosecutor's office on May 17. The Class D felony charges include possession of a controlled substance, Suboxone, a Schedule 3 drug, and possession of methamphetamine.

Vernon will have her initial court hearing when she is considered physically able.