

Woman at wheel of weaving van charged with neglect in recent OVI case

Written by Marty Randall

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A woman found behind the steering wheel of a van on February 23 has not only been charged with operating a motor vehicle while under the influence (OVI) but also one count of neglect of a dependent. Tiffany Castillo, 24, Scottsburg, was allegedly seen by a Sheriff's deputy that Sunday driving the van in an erratic manner on U.S. Highway 31. Deputy Shawn Mayer reported in his probable cause affidavit that he first got a dispatch that a blue van was traveling westbound at a high rate of speed and "...all over the road..." on State Road 256.

He drove his patrol car north toward the intersection of S.R. 256 and U.S. Highway 31 in Austin to watch for the vehicle. In the meantime, Austin Patrolman Nathan Hall had located the van parked at a business along S.R. 256 in Austin. He talked to the driver, identified as Castillo, who reportedly admitted to him that she had crossed left of the center line while on S.R. 256 when she tried to light a cigarette. The officer cautioned her to drive more safely. Four children and a man were in the van with Castillo.

When Ptl. Hall told Deputy Mayer that the van had headed east toward the intersection, the deputy began following the van to observe if the driver was having trouble. The van turned south on U.S. 31 with the patrol car one vehicle back.

Deputy Mayer's probable cause affidavit indicated that the officer saw the van weaving in its lane of traffic. He said the van twice made a quick movement into the northbound lane, with the vehicle being corrected back into the proper lane just as abruptly.

He stopped the van to talk to Castillo. She allegedly told him that she made the movements to demonstrate to her boyfriend what she had done earlier.

With Deputy Jac Sanders now on the scene to assist, Deputy Mayer got the woman to voluntarily attempt a couple of simple tests to determine her ability to drive safely. After getting her consent, Deputy Mayer arranged for a chemical test at Scott Memorial Hospital and transported Castillo to that facility. Deputy Sanders remained at the scene with the male passenger and four children to await a family member who helped get them home.

At the hospital, Castillo purportedly told Deputy Mayer that she "...felt like God was wanting her to be completely honest with me." She then allegedly told the officer that she had not taken her Methadone that day but had taken some Xanax. Both drugs are controlled substances. Indiana State Police Trooper Tracy Spencer administered the chemical test for Castillo and the woman was then transported to the Scott County Security Center.

Castillo appeared in Scott Superior Court on Tuesday, February 25, for an initial hearing. A preliminary plea of not guilty was entered for her on charges of OVI, a Class A misdemeanor, and neglect of a dependent, a Class D felony.

Judge Marsha Owens Howser set her jury trial for May 20 on the charges. Bail was set at \$15,000 corporate surety bond or 10% cash.