



NEWS RELEASE  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Maximum Sentence in Case that Resulted in Death of 10 Year Old Boy**

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – Greene County Prosecuting Attorney Dan Patterson announces that Lonnie D. Yeager, 37, of Springfield, Missouri pled guilty and was sentenced today to serve a year in the Greene County Jail for driving without a license in September 2017. It is Yeager's second conviction for that offense.

The Honorable Mark Powell sentenced Yeager to serve a full year in the Greene County Jail after hearing arguments by the parties. The State had requested that Judge Powell impose and execute the one year sentence, which is the maximum term of incarceration for the A misdemeanor of Driving Without a Valid License, Second Offense.

The charge stems from a crash that occurred on September 25, 2017. Yeager was operating a Chevy Tahoe at the intersection of Grant and Mt. Vernon in Springfield when he experienced an apparent seizure. He accelerated and veered off the roadway, striking people who were gathered outside Campbell Elementary School. The incident occurred just after the conclusion of the school day as students were leaving the school premises. Three students and two teachers were injured in the incident, and 10 year old Riddick Tudor died as a result of his injuries.

When law enforcement officers arrived at the scene, Yeager was seated outside the Tahoe. He was conscious but did not seem to be oriented, and had a blank expression on his face. He was not injured in the crash. Subsequent investigation and review of medical records indicated that Yeager likely suffered a seizure at the time of the crash. Yeager reported to law enforcement officers investigating the crash that he was the victim of an assault while incarcerated in the Department of Corrections for Robbery and Armed Criminal Action. He suffered a traumatic brain injury during the assault and also experienced seizures. Yeager stated at that time that he could not recall when his last seizure took place and that he was not presently medicated for seizures. He also told a police officer that he was deemed incapacitated and disabled as a result of the traumatic brain injury.

Subject: Greene County Prosecuting Attorney Press Release, State v. Yeager, 1831-CR05572

The Court heard sentencing arguments from the parties, which included information that on January 17, 2008, Yeager was determined by the St. Francois County, Missouri probate court to be legally incapacitated. A judge there found that the defendant was “totally incapacitated as defined in Section 475.010 RSMo. and is, therefore, totally disabled, without exception, as provided by Section 475.078.2, RSMo.” The definition of an incapacitated person under Section 475.010 is: “one who is unable by reason of any physical or mental condition to receive and evaluate information or to communicate decisions to such an extent that he or she lacks capacity to meet essential requirements for food, clothing, shelter, safety, or other care such that serious physical injury, illness, or disease is likely to occur.”

At the time of the finding of incapacity, as well as the time of the crash, the defendant’s mother was his court-appointed guardian. Defendant was required to live with her. At the time of this incident, the defendant’s mother resided in Farmington, Missouri, and the defendant resided in Springfield, Missouri.

The State also pointed out in a Sentencing Memorandum filed with the Court that on March 20, 2018, the defendant went to the Missouri License Bureau office located on Park Central Square and obtained a Missouri Driver’s Permit. As part of that process, he signed a License Verification Statement indicating “N” in response to the question “Do you have or have you had Convulsions, Epilepsy, or Blackouts.” On March 28, 2018, the defendant went to the Missouri License Bureau office located on Park Central Square and obtained a Missouri Driver’s License. As part of that process, he signed a License Verification Statement indicating “N” in response to the question “Do you have or have you had Convulsions, Epilepsy, or Blackouts.” Yeager was subsequently issued a Missouri Driver’s License by the Department of Revenue.

Upon receipt of a copy of the Judgment of Incapacity for the defendant, the Missouri Department of Revenue cancelled the defendant’s driver’s license that had been issued in March 2018. Under Section 302.060(5), “The director [of revenue] shall not issue any license and shall immediately deny any driving privilege...(5) To any person who has previously been adjudged to be incapacitated and who at the time of application has not been restored to partial capacity.” Pursuant to that statutory authority, the defendant is not eligible to hold a Missouri driving privilege due to the finding of incapacity, which resulted from a traumatic brain injury, the effects of which include seizures.

Criminal history records show that Lonnie Yeager has prior convictions for Robbery in the First Degree, Armed Criminal Action, Felony Possession of a Controlled Substance, Driving While Intoxicated, and Driving Without a Valid License. He has previously been incarcerated in the Missouri Department of Corrections on four separate occasions for his prior felony convictions and violations of the conditions of his parole.

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**This case was prosecuted by Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Emily Shook. It was investigated by the Springfield Police Department and Detective Darrel Coney was the lead investigator assigned to the case.**

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