



ELLIS COUNTY & DISTRICT ATTORNEY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Date: March 4, 2024

Tri-County Joint Effort Secures 20 Year Sentence for Car Thief

Ellis County and District Attorney Ann Montgomery announced that Johnny Ray James, 43, of Seminole, Texas, pled guilty and was convicted of theft of property greater than \$300,000, a first-degree felony, as well as theft of property greater than \$30,000 but less than \$150,000, a third-degree felony. James was sentenced to 20 years in prison and 8 years in prison in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. A first-degree felony has a punishment range of 5 to 99 years in prison and a third-degree felony has a range of 2 to 10 years in prison. These sentences will be served concurrently.

In May 2022, the Tri-County Auto Burglary and Theft Prevention Task Force investigated reports of multiple high-end vehicles stolen from an auto park in Midlothian, Texas. The task force consists of officers from the Mansfield, Burleson, Kennedale, and Midlothian Police Departments, and the Tarrant County Constable Precinct 7. The task force targets auto burglaries and auto thefts in unincorporated portions of Johnson and Ellis Counties and the cities of Mansfield, Burleson, Kennedale, and Midlothian.

On May 18, 2022, a Cadillac Escalade drove out of a construction gate at the back of the auto park in Midlothian. The next day, the auto park reported two more Cadillac Escalades and two Chevrolet Suburbans were stolen from the park. Investigators discovered that one of the stolen Escalades was used to knock down a fence and was so damaged, the car was left at the scene because it was undrivable. Investigators, however, found a phone left at the scene of the damaged Escalade that led to James. On June 26, 2022, Detective Brett Clifton of the Midlothian Police Department arrested James in Cedar Hill, Texas. In a statement made to the police, James said the vehicles were easy to get and a new \$100,000 vehicle could be sold in Dallas for \$10,000.

“As the former chairperson of the task force, I understand the importance of law enforcement agencies agreeing to work together—even outside their own jurisdictions—to combat auto theft,” stated Montgomery. “Auto theft is rarely confined to one city or even one county. Criminals move cars and parts across jurisdictional lines. I am proud to be a part of this task force and my office will continue to support the good work by law enforcement.”

Assistant County and District Attorney Lisa Turner prosecuted the cases, assisted by County and District Attorney Investigator Todd Woodruff. The theft cases were investigated by the Tri-County Auto Burglary and Theft Prevention Task Force.

