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MAN SENTENCED TO 22 YEARS FOR HOMICIDE BY VEHICLE AND FATAL HIT-AND-RUN

BARABOO, WI – Sauk County District Attorney Michael X. Albrecht announced today that **Taurean Johnson Puttman, 33**, has been sentenced to 22 years in the Wisconsin Prison System for the 2024 death of a bicyclist on Levee Road. The sentence was handed down today by Circuit Court Judge Blake Duren.

Judge Duren sentenced Puttman to **14 years of initial confinement** followed by **8 years of extended supervision**. Puttman was convicted of Homicide by Operation of a Vehicle with a Detectable Amount of a Restricted Controlled Substance, a Class D felony that carries a presumptive minimum of five years of initial confinement.

The conviction follows a tragic incident where Puttman struck and killed a woman while she was riding her bicycle. Following the collision, Puttman fled the scene immediately without stopping to render aid or contact authorities. The investigation into his path of travel was aided by traffic camera footage, which helped establish a timeline for the prosecution. When later confronted by investigators, Puttman claimed he believed he had struck a deer. This claim was directly contradicted by the fact that both the victim and a companion bicyclist were wearing bright-colored cycling clothing, the defendant's own driving behavior following the crash, and the statements of children who were inside his vehicle at the time of the homicide. Forensic testing later confirmed the presence of 3.9 ng/mL of Delta-9 THC in Puttman's blood.

In delivering the sentence, Judge Duren emphasized the gravity of the defendant's actions. He characterized the act of striking a person and fleeing as a crime of moral turpitude and pointedly rejected the defendant's explanation for the crash as not credible. The Court observed that the manner in which the vehicle swerved and quickly recovered suggested the defendant was aware of the impact. Judge Duren further noted a sense of insincerity in the defendant's account, particularly when viewed within the context of his prior criminal history, and concluded that the offense deserved a penalty well in excess of the presumptive minimum.

"Choosing to flee the scene of a collision rather than rendering aid is a profound failure of human decency," said District Attorney Albrecht. "While no amount of time in prison can ever restore what was taken from the victim's loved ones, this sentence represents a significant step in utilizing the full weight of our legal system to address the defendant's callous disregard for life and the dishonesty that followed."

The case was prosecuted by **Chief Assistant District Attorney Rick Spoentgen** and investigated by the Sauk County Sheriff's Office.

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