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NEWS RELEASE

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Paul William Brown, 30, of Fort Bragg, has been sentenced to a year in Mendocino County Jail after entering a guilty plea to a robbery charge stemming from an attempted carjacking in early March.

Brown also was placed on three years' probation by Superior Court Judge Clay Brennan as part of a plea agreement. The judge in return suspended a state prison sentence that Brown faced.

Brown was arrested following an incident on March 7 in the 100 block of North Franklin Street in downtown Fort Bragg. Local resident Lily Jones had parked her Honda Civic about 2:20 p.m. and was on her way to deliver posters to Mendocino Lithographers.

While Ms. Jones was standing next to her car waiting to cross the street, Brown walked by and grabbed her from behind. He attempted to wrest her car keys out of her hand, and when she resisted, Brown hit her on the lips, dug his nails into her "pinky," and twisted her right thumb. Ms. Jones bit him back.

At this point Daniel Hals, a "Good Samaritan," drove by. When he noticed the defendant attempting to grab Ms. Jones' purse, he pulled over, parked his truck, and came to the woman's aid by pulling the defendant off her. Hals wrestled him to the ground, and then stepped on the defendant's head to deter him from further attack. Ms. Jones' injuries were treated at the scene by an ambulance crew.

Police later determined that Brown was under the influence of cocaine.

The District Attorney's office originally charged the defendant with attempted carjacking, which has a maximum prison exposure of 4 and 1/2 years. Further investigation showed that the defendant had, for a moment, separated the keys from the possession of Ms. Jones, which made the crime robbery, for which the maximum prison exposure is six years. If the defendant were to commit any offense after he gets out of jail while still on probation, it is likely he will be sentenced to state prison.

Coast prosecutor Tim Stoen handled the case.

DA Eyster lauded the man who came to the victim's aid.

"Thanks to Mr. Hals' willingness to put him at risk by getting involved Lily Jones was not seriously injured," said Eyster. "It is people like Mr. Hals that help keep our communities safe. We owe him our deepest thanks."