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Update: Pilot recalls tracking 188-mph motorcyclist

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Written by
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He had enough sense to wear a helmet.

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Iowa State Patrol troopers say James Foldenauer of Council Bluffs likely set a state record for speed on a public highway when he reached 188 mph on his motorcycle while fleeing from authorities in 2009. A pilot who tracked him said Thursday that Foldenauer drove on shoulders and the centerline to pass traffic.

A Pottawattamie County jury on Wednesday found Foldenauer, 39, guilty of eluding a peace officer. District Associate Judge Craig Dreismeier convicted Fodenauer for excessive speed for driving 188 mph in a 70-mph zone.

The chase started after a trooper clocked Foldenauer and another motorcyclist traveling at 89 mph in a construction zone on Interstate Highway 29 near Missouri Valley, Ia., on Aug. 5, 2009, said Iowa State Patrol Sgt. Bryan Michelsen.



James Foldenauer / Pottawattamie County Jail photo

The other motorcyclist, a woman, stopped, Michelsen said. Foldenauer accelerated and reached 188 near Honey Creek, Ia. Foldenauer was driving a 2003 Suzuki Hayabusa.

Two Iowa State Patrol officers on the ground and one in the air pursued Foldenauer, although the police cars couldn't keep up with the motorcycle.

"I don't think he knew we had a plane over him. If he had known that, he probably would have stopped," Michelsen said.

The pilot was Scott Pigsley, a senior trooper pilot with the Iowa

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State Patrol. Pigsley has worked for the State Patrol for almost 25 years and has been a pilot for 17 years.

On that day, Pigsley said, he was concerned about the safety of not only the motorcyclist, but also everyone else traveling on I-29 in his path.

"I not only watched him pass on the shoulders at high rates of speed, but I saw him go on the centerline between semis and cars," Pigsley said.

Pigsley tracked his speed by using stop watches and monitoring his time every quarter mile. The measurement is an average of how fast he was going, Pigsley said.

"We kind of constantly clock and recheck zone after zone, and I had multiple clocks depending on what he was doing, maneuvering," Pigsley said.

Pigsley followed the motorcyclist to an Omaha residence, where he was arrested by Omaha police officers.

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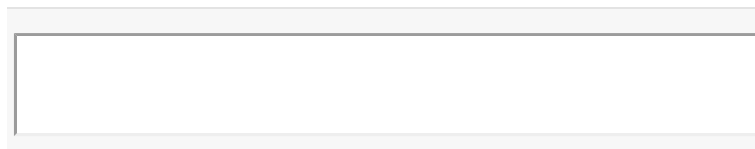
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