

Jacqueline M. Lacy
State's Attorney



Office of the
State's Attorney
Vermilion County, Illinois

Rita B. Garman Vermilion County Courthouse
7 North Vermilion Street, Suite 201
Danville, IL 61832

Main (217) 554-7750
Fax (217) 554-7775

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*****PRESS RELEASE*****

People v. Robert Cunningham 2021-CF-303

Robert Cunningham of Danville, was found guilty June 6, 2023, by a Vermilion County jury of Aggravated Battery to a Peace Officer, a class 2 felony and Aggravated Fleeing or Attempting to Elude a Peace Officer, a class 4 felony.

The jury heard evidence that on May 5, 2021, around 2:00 p.m., Cunningham, led Tilton Police on chase after causing a disturbance at the Tilton Village Hall. Tilton Police Chief Phillip Bernardi attempted to pull Cunningham over, but Cunningham fled past a dead end and on to a sidewalk path, through a parking lot, driving on the wrong side of streets, disobeying stop signs, and reaching speeds in excess of 80 miles per hour on Georgetown Road. The chase ended when Cunningham got his vehicle stuck in a ditch. Cunningham was arrested and secured in a police vehicle. Soon after that, Cunningham managed to move his hand-cuffed hands from behind his back to the front of his body and lured Chief Bernardi into opening the back door of the police vehicle. Witnesses stated this is when Cunningham "launched" himself at Chief Bernardi, leading to a fight on the side of the road, which was witnessed by several people.

Circuit Judge Thomas O'Shaughnessy presided over the jury trial, and will sentence Cunningham on August 8, 2023.

State's Attorney, Jacqueline Lacy, thanks the jurors for their service and attention in hearing this matter. She expressed appreciation for the decision, which affirms that the citizens of Vermilion County do not accept these acts of violence against our community and its Law Enforcement.