Police arrest 34-time felon wanted in Spokane for stealing car with child inside

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Police accuse Aaron A. Dechand of stealing a car with a child in the backseat in August 2018 at a Spokane mini-mart. (Spokane County Sheriff's Office)

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Spokane police have arrested a 34-time felon in their investigation of a 2018 carjacking and kidnapping.

The carjacking suspect, Aaron A. Dechand, 40, of Spokane, was arrested in January in Post Falls for burglary, possessing burglary tools, unlawfully using prescription drugs and lying to police, according to Spokane and Kootenai county court records.

He was also wanted in Idaho for grand theft auto, forgery and leading police on a car chase, and has three active warrants in Washington.

Dechand told police while he was being arrested, "All I can say is, crime in Post Falls is going to go down with me in jail," according to court records.

Spokane detectives had been searching for Dechand since August after they say he stole an idling car from a gas station with a child in the back seat.

The Aug. 29 incident occurred when the victim parked her car at at about 6:20 a.m. at Sam's Stop and Shop at 12309 E. Mansfield Ave. to get some snacks. She left the car running because she said she had battery problems. When she returned, the car was gone along with her 8-year-old daughter in the back seat.

Police say Dechand jumped in the car and sped off while the mother was in the store, but he stopped the car shortly afterward and let the girl out of the car. Unharmed, the child went

to a nearby house to ask for help and was reunited with her mother. Police later found the car.

On surveillance footage from a nearby 7-Eleven, Dechand had tattoos on his lower legs, according to detectives.

A subsequent news release asked for the public's help in identifying the robber, and calls came in identifying Dechand, including from his parole officer, court documents state.

Police almost caught Dechand at Northern Quest Resort & Casino in September, when he was allegedly exhibiting suspicious behavior as a suspect in a human trafficking case, according to court documents. He fled when he was contacted and was able to escape, but police seized the car he was using, which was registered to him and his girlfriend. Police also found a phone in the car with Dechand's pictures on it, records indicate.

The day before Dechand was arrested in January in Post Falls, a man led police on a car chase after committing several thefts and escaped, court documents state. The next day, police received a tip that the man was at a gas station in Kootenai County. In the area, officers located Dechand, who matched the description of the man in the chase.

At first, Dechand gave police two fake names, according to court documents, but eventually identified himself. Police arrested Dechand, who had three active felony warrants in Washington. They found prescription anti-depressant medication with the labels torn off, a blue crowbar and a security camera with screws and wires attached.

Dechand was given a $100,000 bond after the arrest in Kootenai County.

After that arrest, Spokane detectives asked the jail deputy for pictures of Dechand's leg tattoos, attempting to connect him to the carjacking and kidnapping. But the deputy said he had no leg tattoos. Instead, Dechand had "hand drawn art on his left arm that appeared to be a tattoo," court documents state.

Detectives believe Dechand was wearing either a leg-length temporary tattoo or a slip-on tattoo sleeve during the Sam's Stop and Shop carjacking.

Dechand has been convicted of 34 felonies, according to Crime Stoppers of the Inland Northwest. He was sentenced to two years in prison in 2012 for possessing a stolen car, possessing car theft tools and attempting to elude police.

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