

Cops: Driver struck 2 semis with axe

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HAMMOND — Indiana State Police troopers arrested a New Jersey man after he allegedly struck two tractor-trailers with an axe within five miles of each other on Interstate 80 Friday afternoon.

Ivan Savych, 29, was arrested Friday after police say they received two calls separated by approximately 19 minutes from one another about a man attacking a semi-tractor with an axe on the Frank Borman Expressway.

Around 4:30 p.m., state police officers were dispatched to the 1.9 mile marker on I-80 eastbound in Hammond near the Calumet Avenue overpass. Upon their arrival,

police said they located a semi truck parked on the inside shoulder. The driver stated she observed a black Volkswagen with an Illinois license plate driving erratically, brake-checking and cutting off other semis while moving eastbound.

The Volkswagen, the driver later identified as Savych, allegedly stopped in a lane directly in front of the semi, forcing it to a complete stop. The semi truck driver said a white male then exited the Volkswagen without shoes and appearing irate while yelling incoherently. The man then allegedly reversed the Volkswagen, nearly hitting the semi, before again exiting the vehicle — this time

wielding a long-handled axe with a leather blade cover.

The axe was then used to strike the grill of the semi-tractor, which punctured the radiator, as well as the driver-side headlight, police said. The man then began to approach the trucker's driver-side door before her large dog barked loudly inside the cab, causing the suspect to return to the Volkswagen and flee the scene, police said.

Later, at approximately 4:49 p.m., police received a second 911 call reporting a similar incident near the 5.4 mile marker on I-80 eastbound near the Cline Avenue overpass. Here, the suspect allegedly stopped in the roadway and struck a second

semi-tractor with an axe. Police said the semi driver pulled over near Burr Street following the attack, and they said the Volkswagen was traveling between the interstate's middle lanes at approximately 10 miles per hour.

Police said the second semi driver said they attempted to change lanes to avoid the suspect's vehicle, but the Volkswagen swerved in front of him and again came to a complete stop. Savych then allegedly struck the front of the second truck with the same axe before fleeing the scene.

State Trooper Jordin Rosillo observed the suspect vehicle traveling eastbound on I-80, and she activated her emergency lights and

sirens. Savych allegedly accelerated from approximately 16 mph to 60 mph, which initiated a pursuit. The suspect allegedly reached 80 mph before assisting Lake County Sheriff's deputies boxed in the vehicle to bring it to a stop.

A felony stop was conducted, and the driver was detained, police said. The suspect did not speak English and was uncooperative, and the axe was located inside the Volkswagen.

Police said Savych was transported to the Lake County Jail for processing, where he faces preliminary charges of resisting law enforcement, a Level 6 Felony and two counts of criminal mischief, a Class A Misdemeanor.

Hammond man loses appeal in torture case

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A Hammond man serving 52 years in prison for torturing another man received a fair trial at the Lake Superior Court, according to a Friday ruling by the Indiana Court of Appeals.

Aric Fulton, 53, was convicted in 2025 of attempted murder, criminal confinement and robbery in connection with the seemingly unprovoked Nov. 21, 2022, attack on an acquaintance during a 50th birthday party at Fulton's home, according to court records.

Records show Fulton shot the victim in the leg after falsely accusing him of taking a key to Fulton's home. Fulton then claimed the victim was sent to Fulton's home for unknown purposes.

Fulton subsequently struck the victim's head repeatedly with the firearm, forced the victim to strip to his underwear, tied the victim's hands behind his back, pulled money out of the victim's pants, choked the



Fulton

victim until he lost consciousness, beat the victim with a golf club, proclaimed himself the "black Jeffrey Dahmer," and hogtied the victim before throwing him down a flight of stairs, according to court records.

Records show Fulton then choked the victim to unconsciousness again and threatened to "get rid of" the victim and kill his family. Though, Fulton eventually loosened the victim's restraints and put the victim in the victim's car with a bag on his head.

The victim drove to a relative's home in Lansing, Illinois, and police were called. Officers found evidence of the attack, including blood on the floor, steps, and on a golf club, and DNA from Fulton and the victim on the restraints and the bag placed over the

victim's head, according to court records.

In his appeal, Fulton challenged the validity of the evidence presented at his trial, including the exclusion of the victim's status on criminal probation.

The three-judge appellate panel, however, unanimously concluded there was no abuse of discretion by the trial judge.

"The jury heard both Fulton's and (the victim's) versions of what happened and believed (the victim's). We are convinced beyond a reasonable doubt that the verdicts would not have changed had the jury learned of (the victim's) probationary status given the overwhelming evidence supporting Fulton's guilt and (the victim's) version of events," said Appeals Judge Paul Felix on behalf of the court.

Fulton still can ask the Indiana Supreme Court to consider reviewing his convictions. Otherwise, his earliest possible release date from prison is Nov. 22, 2061, records show.

Soliday calls for NIPSCO investigation

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State Rep. Ed Soliday, R-Valparaiso, is calling for an independent investigation into NIPSCO's response to the Aug. 11 derecho, which left more than 300,000 customers without power and thousands of households and businesses without electricity for up to two weeks.

Gov. Mike Braun and the Indiana Office of the Utility Consumer Counselor have asked for an Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission investigation into NIPSCO's response to the storm.

Soliday, who chairs the House Energy, Utilities, and Telecommunications study committee, sent a letter to IURC Chair Anthony Swinger requesting a third-party investigator. He said it could ensure objectivity.

Soliday said his recommendation is about credibility when the entire IURC is new in their roles.

"A third party can bring expertise in such an obviously extraordinary event as just happened in NWI that the IURC is probably not prepared for," he said. "A third-party finding would be less likely



Soliday

to be accused of partisanship."

He said the reviewer "should publicly submit their findings and recommendations to the IURC and legislature for consideration and action."

Swinger has said the IURC is looking to move forward with an investigation into NIPSCO's response to the power outage.

The utility also faces a class action lawsuit alleging it has not invested enough in vegetation management, since most of the power outages were caused by tree branches falling on power lines.

"In the immediate aftermath of an event that significantly impacts people's lives it is easy to jump to conclusions and find easy answers that rarely address the true underlying weaknesses of an emergency response, with more effective interventions often being overlooked," Soliday said. "There are a number of firms that do this type of investigation."

Summit seeks to promote ethics

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MERRILLVILLE — A Northwest Indiana organization focused on applying voluntary ethical standards at local governments across Lake, Porter and LaPorte counties is hosting a no-cost training session Oct. 27 at Avalon Manor in Merrillville.

Anyone is welcome to attend the 2026 Ethics Summit sponsored by the The Shared

Ethics Advisory Committee. Registration is required by Oct. 16 on the sharedethics.com website.

The summit, which begins with breakfast at 8 a.m., will feature a presentation by Judge Elizabeth Tavitias, a Lake County native who serves as chief judge of the Indiana Court of Appeals, as well as group discussion of relevant ethics case studies.

Officials in all three Northwest Indiana counties, nine Calumet Region cities, and 12 towns so far have endorsed the committee's Shared Code of Ethics & Values.

To that end, the participating municipal leaders also are working to heighten awareness of ethics issues in municipal government and assist municipal employees with practical tools to make ethical decisions.



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