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In November of 2024, Amarillo Police Department officers were investigating a theft case. They located a suspect vehicle and approached on foot. The defendant, Ray Cotton, was the driver of the vehicle, and he took off in his vehicle when he saw police approaching, nearly hitting one of the officers. The defendant was later identified by the victim and arrested for evading with a vehicle. He made bond pending trial, and a condition of his bond was that he wear an electronic monitor. In October of 2025, the defendant failed to appear for a court date and his ankle monitor showed to no longer be active. When he was subsequently arrested, he was not wearing the ankle monitor. As a result, he was also charged with bail jumping and tampering with an electronic monitoring device.

In April of 2026, the evading case went to trial in the 181st District Court. A jury found the defendant guilty and then was asked to consider the issue of punishment. The jury heard arguments about probation versus prison time, and sided with the State, sentencing the defendant to four years in prison. The defendant then also pled guilty in his other cases and was sentenced to prison as well.

District Attorney Jason Herring said, "In order for our officers to do their jobs and keep the public safe, individuals in the community must respect the authority of law enforcement. We are thankful that no one was injured and that the jury took seriously the defendant's failure to comply with the officer's instructions and with court orders."

Jason Herring
47th District Attorney