

# Sheriff's copter enlisted in hunt for Island car theft suspect

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A 24-year-old Grand Island man already facing stolen-car charges in Buffalo City Court was taken into custody on Grand Island Boulevard near Bedell Road at about 11 a.m. Tuesday after he allegedly stole two vehicles, one of which he abandoned while being pursued and the second to try to get off the island.

Michael A. Dlugokinski was being held Tuesday night in the Erie County Holding Center on two counts of third-degree grand larceny, two counts of criminal possession of stolen property, three counts of reckless endangerment, two counts of unauthorized use of a motor vehicle, and resisting arrest, unlawful fleeing a police officer and various traffic violations.

Erie County Sheriff Timothy B. Howard, who had his Air One helicopter, piloted by Capt. Kevin Caffery, track the suspect in his cross-island escape attempt, noted that Dlugokinski also faces pending stolen-car charges in Buffalo.

Deputy Sheriff Tom Was spotted someone driving a previously stolen car at Grand Island Boulevard and Staley Road at about 10 a.m., and he gave chase, only to have Dlugokinski abandon that vehicle on Stony Point Road and flee into woods, where a perimeter was set up and Was and State Police K9 Trooper Pierce entered in search with Air One hovering overhead.

However, Dlugokinski quickly stole a second car on Whitehaven Road. When the owner of that vehicle reported the theft, Air One located it on East River Road, leading to Dlugokinski's being arrested on Grand Island Boulevard after nearly having struck three joggers as he sped along Bedell Road, the sheriff said.