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Man who says he has own court and own bank gets five years

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A Kansas City man who claims to have his own court and his own bank has learned — again — that he couldn't have his way in a real courtroom.

A Jackson County judge Wednesday revoked the probation of anti-government activist Denny R. Hardin and sent him to prison for five years. It was for Hardin violating a condition of his probation stating he must not make any court filings or appearances on behalf of anyone other than himself.

Though not an attorney, Hardin acted as his own lawyer Wednesday. He had been on probation since 2006, when a jury found him guilty of tampering with judicial proceedings. He wore blue jeans and a T-shirt printed with "Americans Republic Party" and "Don't Tread on Me." More than a dozen supporters wore the same shirt to the trial.

Hardin told Judge Stephen Nixon his overarching argument since 1991 has been the same. Hardin claims the judicial branch has been overthrown by "foreign agents" who are attempting to deny him the right to practice law.

"They don't want me in their courts because I speak truth ... and know the constitutional law better than they do," Hardin said. "I contend that this is a conspiracy against me."

The judge reminded Hardin to focus on the task at hand, his alleged probation violations.

The first 45 minutes of the hearing were constantly interrupted by objections from Hardin. As the prosecuting attorney presented evidence and questioned witnesses, Hardin continued to object, at times once or more per sentence.

Among other things, Hardin said he signed his probation conditions "U.D." — or under duress — and so the document should be thrown out.

During the hearing, Hardin told the court he had opened the Bank of Denny R. Hardin last year and that he issues bonded promissory notes.

Hardin's activism began in 1991, after law enforcement agents seized his girlfriend's beloved 1977 Corvette, which they called "Betsy." Authorities claimed a drug deal went down inside the car and seized it under Missouri's Criminal Activity Forfeiture Act, but the couple disagreed and went to court to get it back. They didn't have enough money for a lawyer, so Hardin vowed to handle the case himself. They didn't get the car back.

On Wednesday, Hardin acknowledged that he had prepared legal documents for another person and that they were filed in other county courts. But he said since they weren't filed by his own hand, they shouldn't count. Hardin's witness, his daughter Christina Hardin, acknowledged under cross examination that she had filed documents on his behalf.

Hardin can appeal the judge's ruling regarding his probation violation, and plans to do so. "I understand your rules," Hardin told the judge when asked if the appeals procedure was clear. "They are a violation of law."

Hardin was taken into custody immediately following the ruling. As deputies led him out, Hardin looked at attendees in the gallery and said:

"God's will be done, people. Now I get to write that letter to the president of the United States from the Jackson County Jail."

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