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Hannaford parking lot encounter involved a shotgun

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In the vast open spaces of the East Side Plaza parking lot, Craig Driggers said he never dreamed of finding himself in a real-life "Make my day" moment staring down a shotgun-toting motorist unhappy with his parking.

Under any other circumstance, Driggers, 38, said he probably would have just driven away and avoided trouble.

But Driggers' 20-month-old daughter, Sydney, was in her car seat behind him and his disabled mom was sitting beside him when Richard Sinotte, 53, allegedly threatened him outside Hannaford's supermarket about 10:30 a.m. Tuesday.

Driggers said he quickly pulled into the closest handicapped parking spot when he saw his mother leaving the store so she wouldn't have to walk too far. He took the turn wide and his Jeep juttied into the adjacent space.

"I fully admit I was parked liked a jerk. But I was there for 15 seconds before this guy pulled up," Driggers explained later from his home.

He said his mother, Marcia Fowler, 62, politely asked the driver, "Please wait a moment."

But he said Sinotte was angry that Driggers had taken up two handicapped spaces.

"I said I'm sorry but we're going to be here 30 seconds. Please exercise an ounce of patience," added Driggers, a radio disk jockey who works weekends at 106.3 Frank FM-WFNQ in Nashua.

Driggers said Sinotte then pulled his Toyota Tacoma within inches of his Jeep.

"If you hit this vehicle with my infant daughter in it, it's not going to go well for you," Driggers said he warned Sinotte.

That's when the driver reached over and held up a shotgun, Driggers said.

"He very clearly showed it to me and said something to the effect, 'How well do you think it will go for you?'," Driggers recounted. Driggers said the man never pointed the shotgun at him and put the weapon back down.

"I just freaked out at that point and I called the cops," said Driggers, of 71 Hudson St.

Police said they arrived to find Sinotte standing outside his truck and a 12-gauge Remington shotgun lying on the front passenger seat inside. It was not loaded. Police seized the weapon and 10 shells.

Sinotte, who was arrested and charged with felony criminal threatening, said he is "devastated" and "very embarrassed" by the events. He said he neither raised his shotgun nor threatened anyone.

"I'm so heartbroken," an emotional Sinotte said when reached for comment at his 137 Vinton St. home. Sinotte said he spent the morning deer hunting and stopped at the store to return some items when he encountered Driggers.

"I would never hurt anybody," Sinotte said. "I did not point a weapon at him or threaten him. I was just mad at him because he didn't have handicapped plates or a handicapped placard and he was taking up two spaces," Sinotte explained.

Sinotte said he reached over to lock his passenger side door and roll up the window because, he claimed, Driggers was getting out of his Jeep. Sinotte said he backed out of the space and waited for police.

Sinotte, who used to work installing duct work until he became disabled two years ago, was released on \$2,000 personal recognizance bail.