

Alton Man Charged With Shooting At Occupied Jersey County Residence

by Dalton Brown, News Reporter
March 12 2024 3:00 PM



FIELDON - A man from Alton has been charged with shooting into a Fieldon residence while it was occupied by two people, including one of his relatives, after making a series of threats and concerning comments which have brought his fitness to stand trial into question.

Christopher B. Thomas, 44, of Alton, was charged with aggravated discharge of a firearm into an occupied building, specifically a residence on North Warford Road in Fieldon. Court documents allege that Thomas fired into the home from the outside and either “knew or reasonably should have known” the residence was occupied at the time.

According to a petition filed to deny Thomas's pretrial release, on Jan. 17, 2024 at about 11:10 p.m., the Jersey County Sheriff's Office responded to a 911 call reporting "several shots fired" into the bedroom of two of the home's occupants while they were both in bed. Thomas is related to one of the victims in this case and had previously helped them move into the residence, granting him knowledge of where the bedroom was.

When asked about possible suspects, the victims reportedly "had an immediate suspect in mind, due to prior and recent comments/threats" made by Thomas. This included a text message sent by Thomas to one of the victims about the other victim, which read: "If don't get the spirits or whatever she has done, I will kill her and everything she loves."

The day before the shooting, Thomas visited his mother and step-father. During the visit, he was allegedly "waving a radiation meter around" and claimed one of the victims was trying to kill him by poisoning him with radiation. He is paraphrased as having said it's "either me or her," referring to one of the victims - this comment was heard by his step-father, who later reported it to one of the victims, which is why they "had an immediate suspect in mind" shortly after the shooting.

Thomas also allegedly made comments to his mother and stepfather that his wife bought him a gun. His wife later admitted in a recorded interview that he had a handgun months before the shooting and "she told him to get rid of it" - however, he was reportedly seen with a handgun as recently as the week of the shooting on Jan. 17, 2024.

Evidence photographed and collected at the scene of the residence suggests a single shooter acting with a single firearm fired several projectiles into the residence. Both the projectiles and shell casings were recovered from the scene, but not the firearm - according to the petition, "the firearm has yet to be recovered and it is anticipated to be accessible by , pending any information to the contrary."

Footprints were also photographed at the scene which were approximated to be a men's size 10.5. After officers executed a search warrant at Thomas's residence, they found a men's size 10.5 pair of work boots with a tread pattern which appeared to match the pattern left at the scene. The boots are now undergoing forensic analysis at the Illinois State Police Metro East Crime Lab, according to court documents.

Thomas faces a Class 1 felony for the aggravated discharge of a firearm charge in this case. His criminal history includes prior arrests for weapons offenses, an arrest and conviction for assault, burglary convictions, numerous drug arrests and convictions, and a larceny arrest and conviction. The Jersey County Sheriff's Office reports that Thomas has previously made threats to victims from his other criminal cases.

Thomas is now being held in custody at the Jersey County Jail pending a fitness examination, according to court records. The petition to deny his pretrial release states he continues to make “threatening and concerning statements while currently in custody.” Transcripts of these comments are included in the petition. In one comment referring to one of the victims in this latest case, Thomas said: “She’s killing me with radiation, right now in this cell, I’m being killed by her.”

Thomas’s preliminary hearing and review of fitness/detention is set for April 8, 2024.

The issuance of charges is based solely upon probable cause and is not an indication of guilt. All subjects charged with criminal offenses are considered innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.