



OFFICE OF THE VANDERBURGH COUNTY PROSECUTOR

**DIANA L. MOERS**

ADMINISTRATION BLDG. - ROOM 108  
1 NW MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. BLVD  
EVANSVILLE, IN 47708  
(812) 435-5150 | prosecutorinfo@vanderburghgov.org

**\*\*\*MEDIA ALERT\*\*\***

**For Immediate Release**

*March 8, 2023*

*CONTACT: Winston Lin*

*Phone: 219-242-2417*

**JURY FINDS RICHARD THOMAS GUILTY OF CHARGES  
RELATED TO SHOOTING AT POLICE FROM A HOTEL ROOM**

Evansville, IN – Prosecutor Diana Moers announces that, on March 6–8, 2023, the Vanderburgh County Prosecutor’s Office successfully prosecuted Richard Howard Thomas, Jr., who shot at law enforcement including Vanderburgh County Sheriff’s Office Deputies and an Indiana State Trooper from a hotel room at Quality Inn & Suites in April of 2022.

Upon arrival at the hotel room of the Defendant where a civilian was locked inside, Vanderburgh County Sheriff’s Office Deputies Jung and Ray and Indiana State Police Trooper Campbell began a stand-off which lasted for hours and where the Defendant discharged his weapon through the door at the officers and the surrounding area 10 times. Upon arrival the officers heard civilian Christina Zeller yell from the inside of a hotel room, “He’s going to kill me.” After hours of negotiations, the Defendant surrendered to law enforcement.

Methamphetamine was discovered in the room and the Defendant later admitted to firing at the deputies from inside of the room, that he struck Ms. Zeller in the head, and that he owned the methamphetamine.

The jury found the Defendant guilty of three counts of attempted aggravated battery as a lesser included offense of attempted murder, a Level 3 felony; one count of criminal confinement, a Level 3 felony; one count of possession of methamphetamine, a Level 3 felony; one count of possession of a firearm by a serious violent felon, a Level 4 felony; one count of battery by means of a deadly weapon, a Level 5 felony, and one count of criminal recklessness, a Level 6 felony. Thomas also admitted to a felony firearm enhancement.

Prosecutor Moers thanked her Deputies, Joshua Hutcheson and Ian Blair, Detectives Juncker, Toopes, and Budde, the two deputies and the trooper who initially

responded to the incident, Deputy Lancaster, and other law enforcement for their diligent efforts in this case.

“Our law enforcement bravely charge into situations, as here, where their lives may be in danger,” stated Prosecutor Moers, “We are very pleased to secure convictions that punish those who would harm them. The Prosecutor’s Office firmly believes that any violence toward law enforcement is unacceptable and we will prosecute those cases to the fullest extent permitted by law.

Deputy Prosecuting Attorney Joshua Hutcheson commended law enforcement for resolving a tense and potentially deadly situation without serious harm occurring to Ms. Zeller or law enforcement: “Justice was achieved today not only for Ms. Zeller but also for themselves.”

Sentencing is scheduled for March 31, 2023 in front of Magistrate Judge Ryan C. Reed of the Vanderburgh Circuit Court.

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