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*****MEDIA ALERT*****

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DEFENDANT WHO SHOT MAN BEHIND MOVIE THEATER
ON NEW YEAR'S DAY FOUND GUILTY

Evansville, IN –Prosecutor Diana Moers announces that on April 24, 2024, a jury returned a verdict of guilty but mentally ill in the murder trial of Brandon F. Schaefer. After the jury trial, Schaefer also entered a plea of guilty to a sentencing enhancement for his use of a firearm in commission of the murder. The Honorable Magistrate Judge Ceila Pauli of the Vanderburgh County Circuit Court presided.

On January 1, 2023, just shortly after 1:00 a.m., patrol officers of the Evansville Police Department were dispatched to a shots-fired run after a male subject, later identified as the Defendant, called 911 and advised Central Dispatch that he “shot someone in the head behind the movie theater on First Ave.” The Defendant also stated he had “thrown the gun in the creek across from the movie theater.”

Prosecutor Moers stated, “Deputy Prosecutors Stan Levco and Brett Niemeier did an excellent job trying this case efficiently and distilling down the expert testimony regarding the Defendant’s mental state at the time of the crime. We are pleased the jury listened to the opinions of the experts in this matter and returned a verdict of guilty but mentally ill—which is a distinct verdict of guilty that holds the defendant accountable for his actions (not to be confused with verdicts that are not culpable by reason of insanity). The evidence in this case showed that the Defendant knew what he was doing at the time of the murder and could in fact distinguish between right and wrong. Because of the actions of the Defendant, a completely innocent man lost his life. It is clear by the facts of this case—a shooting of a completely innocent person who had never met the Defendant—that it is not safe for the Defendant to live among us in society. We will be asking the court to take this into consideration at his sentencing.”

In addition to the Deputy Prosecutors, Stan Levco and Brett Niemeier, Prosecutor Moers thanks Evansville Police Department Detectives and Officers S. Toney, A, Hagensieker, A. Stepro, K. Thiry, K. Dennis, D. Fair, and her support staff for their efforts in getting this case to trial.

Sentencing is scheduled for May 20, 2024, in front of Magistrate Judge Ceila Pauli of the Vanderburgh County Circuit Court.

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