



BCPO News

Scott A. Coffina, Prosecutor



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Mount Laurel Man Indicted for Bias Intimidation, Damaging Vehicles, Stalking a Neighbor, and Drug and Weapons Violations

Burlington County Prosecutor Scott Coffina announced that a grand jury has returned a 15-count indictment against a Mount Laurel man arrested last summer for bias intimidation of his neighbors, along with damaging property, stalking and narcotics violations, among other charges.

Edward C. Mathews, 46, was indicted on charges of Possession of a Controlled Dangerous Substance with Intent to Distribute (Second Degree), Possession of a Controlled Dangerous Substance (Third Degree), two counts of Possession of a Weapon For an Unlawful Purpose (Third Degree), two counts of Unlawful Possession of a Weapon (Fourth Degree), Stalking (Fourth Degree), Criminal Mischief (Fourth Degree), four counts of Bias Intimidation (Fourth Degree) and three counts of Certain Persons Not to Have Weapons (Fourth Degree).

The indictment was returned January 28 and signed by Prosecutor Coffina. An arraignment will be scheduled soon in Superior Court. Mathews is presently in Burlington County Jail in Mount Holly, where he has been held since being taken into custody at his former residence in the 3600 block of Grammercy Way last year.

The investigation began July 2, 2021, after a resident came to the Mount Laurel Police Department to file a harassment complaint against Mathews. A short time later on the same date, a Mount Laurel police officer responded to a Coventry Way residence on a report of a male needing to be removed from the area. Upon arrival, the officer found Mathews in a verbal altercation with four residents. Mathews, who was using racial slurs, was sent to his residence in an attempt to de-escalate the situation. The ensuing investigation resulted in Mathews being charged later that night for both incidents.

The Mount Laurel Police Department requested that the charges be placed on a warrant, which would have allowed officers to take Mathews into custody and place him in jail. However, this request was denied by the Municipal Court judge who approved the charges, which were instead placed on a summons and prevented the defendant from being placed behind bars.

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Mathews was ultimately arrested when the Prosecutor's Office brought further charges from the July 2 incident.

Additional charges were filed following a search of Mathews' residence by the Mount Laurel Police Department. The warrant authorizing the search was approved after the Mount Laurel Police Department applied for an Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO) against Mathews. An ERPO prohibits the subject of that Order from possessing any firearms.

The ERPO was issued based on the implied threat of the use of weapons Mathews made to neighbors. One of the victims of the harassment charges reported to police that she suspected Mathews had used a BB gun to damage vehicles belonging to her and her daughter.

Seized as a result of the search were a slingshot and multiple ball bearings, which matched projectiles used to damage vehicles in the neighborhood where Mathews resided. The investigation revealed that Mathews had fired the ball bearings at two vehicles belonging to his neighbors, causing \$2,350 in damage. He is also accused of stalking one of the vehicle owners. Also seized were numerous psilocin mushrooms, which are known for their hallucinogenic effect, along with packaging materials.

One of the charges Mathews is facing was filed after a handwriting analysis performed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation revealed that he had written a threatening note left on a neighbor's vehicle. Feces also had been smeared on the vehicle.

The investigation was conducted by the Prosecutor's Office and the Mount Laurel Police Department. The lead investigators are BCPO Detective Daniel Schules and MLPD Detective Luis Amaro.

Mathews is being prosecuted by Assistant Prosecutor Jamie Hutchinson.

An indictment is an accusation. Defendants are presumed innocent unless or until proven guilty.

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