



Office of the Washington County Sheriff

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Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Two men arrested, charged following shooting in Newport apartment

NEWPORT – Two men are in custody and a woman remains hospitalized after being shot during an attempted robbery in her Newport apartment early May 14th.

37-year-old Justus R. Wright of Buffalo and 31-year-old Donald I. Ealey of St. Paul appeared in Washington County District Court last week on charges of first-degree assault, first-degree aggravated robbery, and second-degree firearm assault. They remain in custody at the Washington County Jail in Stillwater on \$400,000 bail.

“The resulting arrests in this case would not have been possible without the hard-work of our dedicated investigations team and supportive partnerships with neighboring agencies and the community,” said Sheriff Dan Starry. “The role of the public was instrumental throughout this investigation, and I’m proud of the collaboration between law enforcement and our citizens to bring about a successful outcome,” he added.

Just after 7:00 a.m. on the morning of May 14th, the Washington County Sheriff’s Office received a 911 call to an apartment complex on the 1700 block of Eighth Avenue for an adult female who had been shot and was bleeding from the abdomen. Deputies from the Washington County Sheriff’s Office and officers from neighboring agencies responded to the residence and immediately began rendering aid to the victim, who was later transported to the hospital and immediately underwent surgery for serious, life-threatening injuries.

The male resident at the apartment told investigators he was woken up to a knock on the door early that morning. Thinking it may be a neighbor or someone he knew, he let the two men inside. Once in the apartment, the male victim noticed one of the suspects was wearing a full facemask and the other had pulled a large handgun which he pressed to the victim’s head. Hearing the commotion, the female occupant approached the suspects, who then fired one shot and struck her in the abdomen. She retreated to the bathroom where she remained until deputies arrived, while the suspects proceeded to move throughout the apartment gathering the victims’ money, cell phone, and BB gun. The male victim was struck in the head with the butt of the gun before the suspects left the apartment, and investigators later located a second bullet lodged in the ceiling nearby.

Surveillance cameras from the apartment and neighboring residents provided investigators with the tools to identify Wright within hours, and he was taken into custody with the help of the Wright County Sheriff’s Office at his home in Buffalo later that afternoon. Ealey was arrested several days later after investigators used footage from Minnesota Department of Transportation traffic cameras to track the suspect vehicle immediately following the shooting as it traveled to Ealey’s neighborhood in St. Paul.

The female victim remains hospitalized in serious but stable condition. Wright and Ealey are expected back in court early June.