

Burglar alarm in barn alerts Lexington farmer to early morning intruder

Written by George Browning

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A burglar alarm he had installed in his barn alerted a Lexington area farmer to a possible intruder early on Monday morning, June 17.

Detective Rick Barrett investigated the incident after being provided with information from the responding officer, Deputy Rex Herald. Both officers are with the Sheriff's Department.

Deputy Herald was dispatched to the farm on Goshen Road around 4:30 a.m. that Monday after the man's wife called 9-1-1 to advise her husband had "...a possible intruder on the ground and that shots had been fired."

Deputy Herald found the owner and the alleged intruder in a back yard. The owner had the suspect at gunpoint, who was identified as Charles C. Roberts, 26, Henryville.

The farmer said he heard the barn's burglar alarm sound, so he got up and went to the structure to investigate. He said he heard something in the loft of the barn, so he walked out in front of the structure.

As the man recounted the experience, he said the hayloft doors "...burst open and the male (suspect)...leaped from the top of the barn to the ground..." As the owner confronted the stranger, he ordered Roberts to the ground. At first, the farmer said Roberts complied, but then Roberts announced he did not think the man would shoot him, so he allegedly got up and began struggling for the gun.

During that skirmish, the gun discharged twice. No one was hurt, though, and Roberts then backed off and stayed on the ground until Deputy Herald arrived.

In an aside, the property owner said Roberts offered him \$100 to let him go. He also allegedly said he had come to the property with a man he knew as "Eddie" to steal a four-wheeler and lawn mower.

Several tools were found which were apparently used to gain entry to the barn. Roberts was also found with several small screws in his pocket, apparently removed from a barn door hasp.

Roberts has been charged with burglary, attempted robbery and battery committed by means of a deadly weapon, all Class C felonies, in Scott Circuit Court.

His initial court appearance occurred on Tuesday, June 18, and Roberts entered a not guilty plea. Bail was fixed by Judge Roger Duvall at \$100,000 corporate surety/full cash. He has been provided with the services of a public defender.

The jury trial is currently scheduled for November 12.

County Prosecutor Jason Mount has also filed a Notice of Habitual Felon Status against Roberts.

According to that document, Roberts was convicted of auto theft and three counts of receiving stolen property in past years. Those charges are Class D felonies. Mount also reserved the right to amend and add an Habitual Felony Offender count at a later date and prior to trial.