

An Austin patrolman called to a possible domestic disturbance at a residence ended up taking several people in custody over a suspected "bottle" methamphetamine lab early Tuesday morning, June 19.

Patrolman Robert Gudgel was dispatched to a residence at 1229 U.S. Highway 31 North just after 1 a.m. in regard to what dispatchers said was a domestic disturbance.

He talked to Brenda Sue Combs, 50, a resident there and her friend, Shannon Louise Tyree, 37, Scottsburg. They told the officer that Randall Dale Tarlton, 53, of that residence, had thrown water at Combs and hit her in the face before leaving. Combs told the officer she did not want Tarlton to come back, but she also did not want to press charges. The officer left.

At 1:38 a.m., he was dispatched back to that address because Tarlton had returned.

When Ptl. Gudgel asked Tarlton what was going on, the man allegedly told the officer that "...they don't want me here because they're cooking meth(amphetamine) here."

Tarlton then led the officer to a "one pot" or "bottle" meth lab in a ditch along U.S. 31. Ptl. Gudgel alerted Indiana State Police, which has a team trained to dispose of such illegal operations.

Along with Patrolman Robert Hickman, the officer began searching the residence. A backpack was found in a laundry hamper in a hallway of the home. It allegedly contained precursors used to create the illegal drug.

All subjects at the residence were then detained. The two women "...started screaming at each other..." the officer related in his case report. One blamed Darrell Polly, 23, Crothersville, who was visiting at the home, for the presence of the bottle lab.

With ISP Troopers Mark LaMaster and Tom Basham on the scene, evidence was collected and the "lab" dismantled. Combs, Tarlton, Tyree and Polly were all transported to the Scott County Security Center in Scottsburg.

Preliminary charges filed against the individuals include maintaining a common nuisance, a Class D felony, against Combs and Tarlton, and visiting a common nuisance, a Class A misdemeanor, filed against Polly and Tyree.

On Thursday, June 21, each of the four defendants had his/her initial court hearing.

All are charged with unlawful possession of a syringe, with Combs and Tarlton charged with maintaining a common nuisance and Tyree and Polly charged with visiting a common nuisance. In addition to those charges, Combs, Tyree and Polly are each charged with possession of more than ten grams of a drug precursor.

Each defendant entered a not guilty plea to the charges against him/her. Each received a jury trial date of September 17, and each had bond reduced from \$10,000 corporate surety/10% cash to \$5,000 corporate surety/10% cash.

Tarlton and Combs have been assigned public defenders to assist them with their cases.