

\$1 million bond placed on suspect in attempted murder/rape case in Scottsburg

Written by Marty Randall

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A \$1 million bond is keeping the suspect in a new criminal case in jail and away from the alleged victim.

James E. Johnson, 26, North Meridian Street, Scottsburg, was recently arrested by officers on charges of attempted murder, rape and aggravated battery stemming from a June 28 incident that allegedly occurred at the Pine Street Apartments on the city's north side.

According to the probable cause affidavit prepared by Lt./Detective Mike Nichols of the Scottsburg Police Department, Lt. David Hardin was called to an apartment. He saw a woman who had apparently been severely beaten about the face and had suffered a slash wound to her throat. Scott County EMS technicians stabilized the victim, who told the officer that she had been attacked by a man in her apartment.

Blood was found on the walls and floor of the apartment's kitchen and in the woman's bedroom. Also recovered was a broken blade or razor purportedly used in the attack.

When the woman was released from the hospital, she was interviewed by Det. Nichols. He recorded that the woman said her assailant was Johnson, a friend of other nearby apartment dwellers. He reportedly came to her apartment the night of June 28 and asked her to perform a sexual act. She said she refused and was then struck in the face at least six times and then cut on her throat. She was also reportedly sexually assaulted twice in her bedroom by the man.

The woman remains under a doctor's care and may require more surgery to correct an eye socket injury, the document stated.

The probable cause affidavit and the charges were filed July 23 by the Scott County Prosecutor's Office. Johnson was then served with the arrest warrant and had his initial court appearance on Friday, July 24.

Attempted murder is a Class A felony as are the two counts of rape. One aggravated battery charge is a Class B felony, while the other two are Class C felonies.

After a not guilty plea was entered for Johnson, Circuit Court Judge Roger Duvall set the \$1 million bond in the case based on Prosecutor Jason Mount's motion for a higher than standard bond. Mount based that motion on the fact that Johnson had been on probation for Class B felony child molesting at the time of the June 28 incident.

Additionally, an Habitual Offender Notice was filed by Deputy Prosecutor Ryan Painter against Johnson. Johnson, Painter noted in his motion, had been convicted of Class D felony escape in 2002 and 2003; possession of a controlled substance in 2003; and the 2005 child molesting charge.

Should he be found guilty of being an habitual offender, his sentence on any other charges could be enhanced.

Johnson's trial date is scheduled for November 3. He was provided with the services of a public defender.