

Chaz Forrest pleads not guilty to murder, attempted murder charges

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By ALLISON PETTY - H&R Staff Writer | Posted: Thursday, August 25, 2011

DECATUR - Chaz F. Forrest, 29, pleaded not guilty Wednesday to charges that he gunned down five men, fatally wounding one.

Forrest entered the plea during his preliminary hearing in Macon County Circuit Court. He is charged with three counts of first-degree murder, four counts of attempted murder and six weapons offenses.

The charges stem from a shooting that took place at 2:50 a.m. July 24 at the corner of William and Witt streets. It left 23-year-old Justin Redmon dead and seriously wounded Jasper Milan, 20, and Eric Jones, 29.

The other two gunshot victims, Kevin Day, 25, and Marlene Dishman, 21, were treated and released from the hospital.

Detective Tim Carlton of the Decatur Police Department testified at the hearing.

Carlton said witnesses told police that Forrest was the one who committed the shootings, and he was also identified in a photo lineup.

Police arrested Forrest at 11 a.m. July 24 at the Lakeview Motel at U.S. 36 and Country Club Road. Carlton testified that Forrest was getting into a 2001 Pontiac Grand Prix in the hotel parking lot when he was arrested.

He allegedly told police that they could find a gun and ammunition in his car, which they did. Carlton also testified that Forrest said, "I told y'all I was coming to turn myself in."

Sworn police statements indicate that Forrest acknowledged he had fired the bullets but said he did so because he thought one of the men was going to pull a gun on him.

Based on Carlton's testimony, Circuit Judge Thomas Griffith ruled that there was enough evidence to proceed with the case.

Forrest was represented by Monroe McWard of Taylorville and Mark Kevin Wykoff Sr. of Springfield. Prosecutors in the case will be assistant state's attorneys David Spence and Elizabeth Dobson.

Forrest's next court appearance in the case is scheduled for 9 a.m. on Oct. 3 in Courtroom 3B.

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