

## 1 WHITE, 1 BLACK, NO PRIORS



### **Staunton gunman reportedly threatens police, but then is released on unsecured bond**

**Patrick Hite**

Staunton News Leader

STAUNTON — There is little information available Saturday about why a gunman who reportedly threatened police was quickly released on an unsecured bond.

It started when, police responded to the 2500 block of Bath Street for a report of a male armed with a firearm Friday night.

At approximately 7:15 p.m. Friday, witnesses reported that a male with a firearm threatened violence to a group of individuals on Miller Street. The male subsequently threatened responding police officers with violence.

The Staunton Police Department received assistance from the Augusta County Sheriff's Office and Charlottesville Police Department. Douglas B. Truslow, 57, of Staunton was taken into custody without further incident at approximately 3:24 a.m. Saturday.

No injuries were reported as a result of the incident.

Truslow was charged with brandishing a firearm and communicating a written threat of death or bodily injury. He was released by the state magistrate on an unsecured bond.

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## **1 white, 1 Black, no priors: Two cases show difference in way bail is handled by magistrates**

**Brad Zinn**

Staunton News Leader

It's a tale of contrasting bonds issued recently by two local magistrates.

One involved a young Black suspect reportedly armed with a skateboard; the other a middle-aged white man allegedly armed with two rifles and a handgun.

Early Friday evening, court documents show that Douglas B. Truslow, 57, a resident of 2522 Bath Street in Staunton, was involved in an altercation with his neighbors.

According to witnesses, at about 6 p.m. Truslow went to his neighbor's home, where there was a large gathering of people —16 of them children — and spoke with them for about 30 minutes.

After he left, an hour later one of the people at the gathering noticed a red dot on their chest. Truslow was then allegedly spotted pointing a gun at the group from his property, court documents show. He reportedly told them they had "fair warning" and "that he was going to start shooting."

After the group ran into the home, witnesses said a "green beam" was pointed inside the residence while Truslow was on his porch, court records show.

Another witness said a red dot was pointed at the chest of an elderly woman and on the forehead of a 5-year-old boy. Truslow was also seen in his front yard lying in the grass behind a tree with a gun, according to witness accounts.

The Staunton Police Department, the Augusta County Sheriff's Office and the Charlottesville Police Department responded to the scene. A standoff ensued as Truslow kept authorities at bay for eight hours.

During the standoff, Truslow went through his home turning lights off and on, and allegedly made threats to kill several police officers. Authorities made contact with Truslow and texted with him during the standoff. In a text to one police officer, Truslow "asked him if he had children and that he should let them know that he is going to die tonight," records show.

Following Truslow's arrest on three misdemeanor charges of brandishing a firearm and one felony charge of communicating a threat, police seized two rifles, a pistol, two lasers, two scopes and a suppressor from his home, according to a search warrant.

Truslow, who had no criminal history prior to Friday night's incident, was taken in front of Magistrate Judith Owens, records show. Owens gave him a \$1,000 unsecured bond, meaning he had to put up no cash and was immediately released.

Court records state Truslow is the lone caregiver for his spouse and that he receives a monthly disability check of \$1,300 from the state.

### **Devin Turner charged**

Truslow's treatment by the magistrate's office differs sharply when compared to the case of Devin A. Turner, a 22-year-old Stuarts Draft man arrested a week earlier by Augusta County authorities.

According to the sheriff's office, on the afternoon of Oct. 16, Turner was walking along Draft Avenue when he allegedly threw his skateboard at a car as it passed by.

The next day, authorities arrested Turner after a witness to the incident gave the sheriff's office his name.

When Turner — who like Truslow had no prior criminal record — appeared before Magistrate Jaime Long on one felony count of shooting/throwing missiles at an occupied vehicle and a misdemeanor charge of destruction of property, he was incarcerated without bond at Middle River Regional Jail, records show.

Turner is Black. Truslow is white.

Court records show Turner was eventually granted a bond hearing after spending the weekend in jail. At the hearing, an Augusta County General District Court judge issued a \$5,000 unsecured bond and Turner was released from jail.

### **Head magistrate, chief of police respond**

Chief Magistrate Robyn Wilhelm was asked by The News Leader for an explanation concerning bond discrepancies in the cases of Truslow and Turner.

Wilhelm said the magistrates stick to a prepared script of "very mechanical, methodical questions" when deciding bond for suspects. She said if there are concerns about a particular bond, police and the commonwealth's attorney's office can reach out to her or go through the courts to have a bond revoked.

"I have not received any of those calls for these cases," she said.

Wilhelm said Virginia's magistrate system is unique in that suspects can immediately get a bond hearing at night or on weekends, perhaps preventing suspects from having to stay in jail overnight or for an entire weekend while awaiting an opportunity for a bond hearing in front of a judge in court.

"I definitely feel that's kind of a benefit for our system, but we're dealing with humans so oftentimes there could be imperfections," she said. "Certain judges will find people guilty of one thing but another judge ... could find someone innocent."

Wilhelm said she was not at liberty to discuss the particulars of any bond hearing.

On Tuesday, when asked to comment on the Truslow case, Staunton Police Chief Jim Williams said, "We certainly felt better about him being released once we obtained all the firearms from the house."

As for the bond itself, Williams said, "We respect the decision of the magistrates, and that's the system that we have," he said. "There's a lot of components to the criminal justice system — the police, the courts, the commonwealth's attorney, all of them — and we don't always agree with decisions that are made but we respect those decisions."

Staunton Commonwealth's Attorney Jeff Gaines was also asked about Truslow's low bond and if he plans to appeal the magistrate's decision. On Wednesday, the prosecutor said he was reviewing the case file and will be speaking to the victims in an effort to determine his next move.

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## **8-hour police standoff: Before an alleged gunman was released on unsecured bond**

**Brad Zinn**

Staunton News Leader

STAUNTON — A tight-knit group of family and friends live in and around the 2500 block of Bath Street in Staunton, and during the early-evening hours of Oct. 23 several adults and 16 children, many of whom spent the day doing their virtual schooling, gathered together outside for a night of rock painting.

After that, there were Halloween decorating plans for three apartments that sit side-by-side in the same building.

But an armed next-door neighbor who allegedly trained a laser on several of the people gathered that night — including on the forehead of a 5-year-old boy — would nix those plans, resulting in a nearly eight-hour standoff that ended with the man's arrest and the confiscation of three guns.

Within hours, authorities released the white suspect — despite a search warrant that shows he reportedly threatened to kill police — on an unsecured bond. Just a week earlier, a Black man who also had no priors was held all weekend at Middle River Regional Jail with no bond. His alleged crime: Launching his skateboard at a car.

The two cases show how bond can be handled differently in this part of Virginia. The News Leader is doing a series of articles, "One white, 1 Black, no priors," concerning the two cases.

### **A normal night turns weird**

Jessica Folley, 37, lives behind the Staunton apartment building and was part of the group that gathered that night on Bath Street more than a week ago.

"I'm right behind them," she said. "Their back door faces my back door."

The rock painting had started in earnest that Friday night, and Folley was outside when she first spotted 57-year-old Douglas Truslow eyeing the group from his property next door, which sits atop a hill and looks down on the apartment building.

Truslow, who had never conversed with his next-door neighbors before, then walked down to the parking lot of the apartment building.

"It was kind of weird," Folley said.

Truslow made small talk with some in the group, mentioning his landlord, his prior military service, scuba diving interests and his ailing wife. He even offered to bring some rum over the following day to share. He didn't give his name.

Truslow also reportedly made light of a man's supposedly saggy jeans, Folley said, although the four people interviewed for this article made it clear the pants were being worn in a normal fashion.

That, though, was as about as tense as the conversation got, Folley said, and Truslow went back to his home after about 30 minutes.

A short time later, as some of the children and adults were still outside, it was dusk when Folley, who is pregnant with twins, saw a red laser on one of the adults.

"She kept saying, 'what is this on me? What is this on me?'" Folley recalled. Then the laser was pointed at a young boy, part of a set of triplets.

"It was beamed onto his forehead, like execution style," Folley said.

The laser zeroed in on Folley's stomach. "I jumped back," she said. "Then you just seen the beam going everywhere."

The laser, she quickly discovered, was coming from Truslow's property.

Of the three apartments, 25-year-old Asia Scott's is the closest to Truslow's. Scott said when the red laser started appearing, she figured it was probably a prank.

"You can buy lasers at the store," she said. "So we're thinking we're in an apartment complex, maybe kids are playing around."

That's when she spotted Truslow next door standing on his side porch. Scott said she grabbed a flashlight and shined it on him. He was holding a revolver, she said.

"I warned you all, I'm going to start shooting," he said, according to Scott. Those interviewed about the incident said he never issued an actual warning prior to that announcement.

At that point, the adults quickly got all of the children into the building that houses the apartments. Scott said she ventured back outside and saw Truslow on the front porch of his home with a green laser.

"I was like, oh shoot, that's a bigger gun, so I told all the adults," Scott said. Another person in the group called 911.

A man who lives in the apartment building hopped in a car and positioned it in front of Truslow's home, lighting it up with his high-beams. Truslow was spotted next to a tree.

"We see him laying in the grass like he's a sniper," Scott said. Another witness The News Leader spoke to also said she saw Truslow in the grass with a rifle.

Truslow quickly retreated into his home. "After that, we didn't see him no more," Scott said. Like the others, prior to the incident, Scott said there were no indications that Truslow seemed upset with the group.

The Staunton Police Department received two noise complaints concerning the apartment building on Aug. 29 and Sept. 11, records show. Police would not say who called in the complaints.

Ashley Scott, 31, also of Staunton, is Asia Scott's cousin. She too was at the gathering, and said she was helping an elderly woman out of her chair when the red laser crossed her body.

"It was on me first," she said. "When I jumped, everybody else jumped."

Ashley Scott didn't know where the laser was coming from, but said she found her son, one of her 5-year-old triplets, playing in the grass. The laser had settled onto the child's forehead.

"When I seen that it was on my son's head, I knew it was serious," Ashley Scott said. "Ain't nobody going to play like that."

After the flashlight was shined on Truslow, Ashley Scott said she saw he was holding a revolver. Truslow's property has a white picket fence in front, an American flag dangling off a side porch, and a sticker on a front window from an ammunition manufacturer that reads, "It's not the dog you need to worry about." Two bullets are pictured on the sign.

After police were called to the scene, the Staunton Police Department said Truslow kept them at bay for eight hours and refused to emerge from his home. All of the people at the gathering were forced to stay inside their building for several hours before being given an armed police escort to safety.

During the standoff, Truslow went through his home turning lights off and on, and allegedly threatened to kill several police officers, an affidavit to a search warrant shows. Authorities made contact with Truslow and texted with him during the standoff. In a text to one police officer, Truslow "asked him if he had children and that he should let them know that he is going to die tonight," court records show.

Following Truslow's arrest on three misdemeanor charges of brandishing a firearm and one felony charge of communicating a threat, police seized two rifles, a pistol, two lasers, two scopes and a suppressor from his home, according to a search warrant.

Truslow, who had no criminal history prior to the incident, was taken in front of a local magistrate and given a \$1,000 unsecured bond, meaning he had to put up no cash and was immediately released.

Court records state Truslow is the lone caregiver for his spouse and that he receives a monthly disability check of \$1,300 from the state.

Truslow's seemingly smooth release differed greatly when compared to that of another man arrested a week before the standoff. The man was accused of throwing a skateboard at a vehicle in Stuarts Draft. [The suspect in that case, who is Black, was denied bond by a magistrate and jailed following his arrest.](#) He also had no prior criminal charges.

And although Truslow is white and all of the victims in the case are Black, none of them said they experienced any racial overtones during the incident except for the pants comment earlier that night.

When asked how it felt to see a white man who allegedly threatened more than 20 Black people — along with a reported threat to kill a police officer — get such a quick release from custody, Ashley Scott said she wasn't surprised.

"It's normalized to me. I felt like it's normal with everything going on in the world," she said. "I'm not making it a race thing, but that's the way I had to look at it."

She admitted she thought the entire incident might get swept under the rug. "It was either I had to eat it or somebody help me," she said.

Folley said the incident left her rattled, and said she's mistakenly seen red dots on the wall of her home since that night.

"I was furious," Folley said when she heard Truslow had been released.

Victoria Scott, also 31 and a Staunton resident, was at the gathering as well. "We just all guarded the kids and put all the kids in one (apartment) ... the furthest one," she said. "They were scared, they were crying."

She admitted to being "pissed" upon learning of Truslow's quick release.

Asia Scott, who ended up staying at Victoria Scott's home after the standoff ended, said she was awakened and told of her neighbor's release from custody. "The first thing I said is what the hell?"

The News Leader went to Truslow's home last week and tried to reach him by phone, but was not successful in getting a comment.

His first court appearance is scheduled for Wednesday, Nov. 4, in Staunton General District Court.

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## **Magistrates hold real power over us. Read about their history and modern role.**

Ayano Nagaishi

In a time where the anatomy of criminal justice has been closely examined across the country, Virginia is no exception. However, a historical piece to the governmental puzzle is often overlooked.

"Magistrates" are often behind the scenes of the state justice system despite doing work that is most critical to judicial infrastructure today.

The News Leader has been highlighting the significance of the magistrate office and discrepancies in the way that the judicial system operates — discrepancies that can start with magistrates. Recently, a white man charged with three misdemeanors and one felony got a \$1,000 unsecured bond and was let go a week after a Black man with one misdemeanor and a felony charge was hit with a \$5,000 unsecured bond requirement after spending the entire weekend in Middle River Regional Jail.

The situation raised questions about the work of magistrates in Virginia.

But what is the Magistrate Office, and why is it still relevant centuries after it was first established? Many answers can be found in the magistrate manual provided by the Virginia Judicial System, which is the main source of all information below. To understand the fabric of the magistrates, we will have to go back — way, way back.

### **The Origins of Peace Keepers**

The history of magistrates still holds relevance to the current mechanics of the system today. Its origins began in 12th century England, when the idea of peace was extended beyond the rich and the royal to all subjects in the kingdom.

Although the national term “King’s peace” sounded exclusive, once it was extended and enforced in England it protected everyone from lawlessness and disorder. King’s Peace was enforced by certain knights who swore against criminality and to pursue all offenders of peace, while later turning them into the sheriffs before they were tried. It was then that the ancestors of the modern-day magistrates began.

By 1361, every county in England was to have three or four worthy justices with the power to administer law by arresting, trying and punishing those who disturbed the peace. The powers of these peace officers ebbed and flowed throughout history, but their goal always remained the same: protect justice.

The governmental devotion to pursuing justice and peace emigrated to Virginia with the colonists, who formally established “Justices of the peace” in the state in 1661. Similar to the conversations of justice in England, they were required to swear an oath to justice and had similar duties, although they couldn’t sentence an offender to death or amputation.

Virginia’s justices of the peace eventually lost some of their powers, including the ability to act as a trial judge, which was abolished in 1934, and the power to right or try cases unless authorized by statute.

It wasn’t until Jan. 1, 1974, that the General Assembly of Virginia abolished the office of justice of the peace and replaced the institution with the office of magistrate.

Current Virginian magistrates may hold lesser powers than their predecessors, but they are a quiet and buried cog in the criminal justice system in Virginia and make decisions that are more critical and important today now than ever.

### **Who can be a Magistrate?**

Before 1960, all magistrates were elected. The United States transitioned slowly from electing magistrates to appointing them until 1974, when it was decided the chief circuit court judge holding jurisdiction within the magistrate's district would choose the candidate.

Ever since July 1, 2008, the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court of Virginia and the chief judges of the circuit courts appoint the magistrates.

Unlike judges, magistrates have significantly less demanding requirements to qualify for the job.

As of July 1, 2008, candidates must have a bachelor's degree from a credible institution of higher education and submit fingerprints to conduct both a national and state criminal records search.

Additionally, the person appointed must not have been convicted of a felony or have an offense that requires registration in the Sex Offender and Crimes Against Minors Registry.

The appointed magistrate must not be a law enforcement officer or have a spouse that is a clerk, deputy or assistant clerk, or an employee of any clerk of a district or circuit clerk. They must not have a parent, child, spouse or sibling that is a district or circuit court judge in their jurisdiction. The appointee must not be a member or officer of any other governing body for any political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Finally, the appointee cannot hold any position with the federal government and cannot have a spouse or relative in the same household who works for a supervising official if that supervised person's salary is \$35,000 or more.

### **Post-Election Training**

A magistrate must take an oath of office. Once they are sworn in, magistrates have to complete the minimum training standards from the Committee on District Courts.

A newly appointed magistrate has to complete their training standards before their nine-month probationary employment.

"I would add that our current training process requires new magistrates to participate in a four week Certification School and participate in at least 240 hours of field training before they are certified for duty," said Jonathan Green, the director of Department of Magistrate Services.

The Committee on District Courts require magistrates to go through additional training throughout and all magistrates have to obtain 20 mandatory legal education credits each year.

### **The Gravity of the Magistrate**

Magistrates have several responsibilities including issuing arrest warrants, summonses, search warrants, emergency protective orders, emergency custody order and certain civil warrants. One of the most important duties they have is holding bail hearings.

Many citizens' initial interaction with Virginia's judicial system is with a magistrate during their bail hearing, according to the Supreme Court of Virginia. Magistrates have the power to determine the conditions for someone to be released from custody. Magistrates work both on and around-the-clock to manage hearings in person and virtually.

Bail hearings and the decision of how much bail will be can have major impacts on a person's life. Based on magistrates' judgment, it could be hundreds to thousands of dollars or nothing at all.

"A magistrate has discretion in deciding the issue of bail. The Code of Virginia does not impose a scale of dollar amounts tied to specific crimes. A magistrate may determine that conditions of release are not necessary," according to the magistrate manual.

After the bail hearing, a magistrate faces four options. The first is **recognizance**, which only asks for the defendant's written promise to abide by any terms ordered by the judicial officer on behalf of being released. No monetary pledge or financial bond would be posted in this case.

Second, there is the possibility of **unsecured bond**. Unsecured bonds are similar to recognizance bonds, however, if the defendant does not appear in court, they must pay a certain amount they agreed to in their bail hearing set by the magistrate.

**Secured bonds** require the defendant to pay an amount of allotted money in order to be released from custody pre-trial. However, if they successfully appear at all court hearings, they will have their money returned to them.

Finally, there is the possibility that a defendant will be **ineligible for bail**. If the magistrate decides this, the defendant is unable to be released pre-trial and will be jailed.

According to the Magistrate Manual, the most important purpose of a bail hearing is to assess the risk of the accused and determine whether they will be a danger to themselves or others if released before their trial date. In order to properly make the assessment, magistrates follow strict guidelines and even have a checklist they must complete in respect to every case they hear.

The checklist brings up questions like: Was a firearm alleged to have been used in the offense? What is the weight of the evidence against the accused? Does the accused own a business? What attitude is the accused projecting? What is the accused's length of residence in the community? Along with many more items.

According to Virginia law, it is recommended that the magistrate set bail for a defendant.

When a magistrate decides an individual is ineligible for bail, the decision mostly rests on the belief that the defendant will not appear in court for future hearings and therefore must stay in custody, or that the defendant is a risk to society and themselves if released.

A decision for a bail hearing must not be met until the arresting officer provides the defendant's criminal history to the magistrate, who then must consider it before setting bail for the individual.

While the oversight and power of magistrates have changed throughout history, they still hold significant weight in the judicial and criminal justice system simply by determining bonds, which in turn can drastically impact an individual's life.

The News Leader will continue to shed light on the critical infrastructure of Virginia's judicial system, including the way the magistrates work and who they affect in everyday life.

— Reach me at [ANagaishi@newsleader.com](mailto:ANagaishi@newsleader.com). Follow me on Twitter [@yanonaga98](https://twitter.com/yanonaga98).

## **Prosecutor wants Staunton gun threat suspect in jail or monitored awaiting trial**

**Brad Zinn**

Staunton News Leader

STAUNTON — A man who was granted a minimal bond by a local magistrate — despite being accused of brandishing two guns at a group of more than 20 people and allegedly threatening to kill a police officer — will have that freedom tested after Staunton Commonwealth's Attorney Jeff Gaines recently filed a motion appealing the bond.

Police arrested Douglas B. Truslow, 57, of Staunton, during the early-morning hours of Oct. 24 following a nearly eight-hour standoff.

Truslow is accused of pulling at least two guns on a group of people on Bath Street in Staunton the night of Oct. 23 and shining lasers on several of them, including a young child, based on court files and witness statements.

He faces three misdemeanor charges of brandishing a firearm and one felony charge of communicating a threat.

Following the standoff, police seized two rifles, a pistol, two lasers, two scopes and a suppressor from his home, a search warrant filed in Staunton Circuit Court.

The recent court filing by Gaines shed new light on the incident, including allegations Truslow was under the influence of alcohol that night and was upset by the level of noise supposedly being created by his neighbors.

Truslow denied pointing a gun at anyone but admitted to police that he used a laser on the crowd "and he had done so with the intent to intimidate them and scare them because he was upset because the noise they were making was disturbing him and upsetting his terminally ill wife," Gaines' court filing states.

In his motion to appeal the bond, Gaines said Truslow refused to come out of his home until "confronted with armed law enforcement officers approaching in an armored vehicle." Gaines said Truslow also conceded that his alcohol consumption on the night of the incident "contributed to the ensuing situation."

Within hours of his arrest, Truslow was a free man after a local magistrate gave him a \$1,000 unsecured bond, meaning he had to put up no cash and was immediately released.

In an unrelated arrest a week earlier, a young Black man from Stuarts Draft who also had [no priors was held all weekend at Middle River Regional Jail with no bond](#). His alleged crime? Throwing his skateboard at a car.

The two cases show how bond can be handled differently in this part of Virginia. The News Leader is doing a series of articles, "One white, 1 Black, no priors," concerning the two cases. [Get the News Alerts newsletter in your inbox](#).

[Witnesses from the night of the standoff nearly two weeks ago said](#) a group of 20 people, most of them children, were painting rocks outside of an apartment building in the 2500 block of Bath Street before a planned night of Halloween decorating. Shortly after 6 p.m., Truslow, who'd never spoken to his neighbors in the apartment building in question, walked over and made small talk before heading back to his home.

About an hour later, witnesses said lasers were being aimed at their bodies, the head of a 5-year-old boy and the stomach of a pregnant woman who is carrying twins. Truslow was also spotted in his yard with a revolver and a rifle, witnesses said.

Court files said Truslow would not cooperate with police during the standoff and reportedly threatened to kill a Staunton police officer in a text, allegedly asking "if he had children and that he should let them know that he is going to die tonight."

In his appeal, filed Thur., Oct. 29, Gaines is asking a judge to either hold Truslow in jail without bond or have him placed on home electronic monitoring while awaiting trial.

A hearing on the bond appeal will be held Nov. 18, Gaines said.

Truslow appeared in Staunton General District Court on Tuesday morning and will be appointed an attorney, Gaines said.

*Have questions or a tip? Email Brad Zinn at [bzinn@newsleader.com](mailto:bzinn@newsleader.com). You can also follow him on [Twitter](#).*

## **Prosecutor: Magistrate's bond 'not appropriate'**

**Brad Zinn**

Staunton News Leader

STAUNTON — A judge on Wednesday amended the bond of a Staunton man suspected of brandishing a gun at a group of more than 20 people and holding police at bay for several hours during a standoff last month.

On the night of Oct. 24, Douglas B. Truslow, 57, is accused of brandishing a firearm and shining lasers on the group — several adults and nearly 20 children — at an apartment building next door to his home.

Truslow also allegedly threatened to kill a Staunton policeman during an ensuing standoff. In a text, he "asked him if he had children and that he should let them know that he is going to die tonight," court records show.

Following the eight-hour standoff in the 2500 block of Bath Street, and after an armored police vehicle was positioned in front of his home, Truslow finally surrendered to authorities shortly before 3:30 a.m. the next day.

Arrested on three misdemeanor charges of brandishing a firearm and one felony charge of communicating a threat, police seized three guns, two lasers, two scopes and a suppressor from Truslow's home, according to a search warrant.

Truslow, who had no prior charges on his record before his arrest, wasn't in custody very long as a local magistrate gave him a \$1,000 unsecured bond. He was released soon after.

Just a week earlier, a 22-year-old Black man who also had no priors was held all weekend at Middle River Regional Jail with no bond after allegedly throwing his skateboard at a vehicle in Stuarts Draft.

The two cases show how bond can be handled differently in this part of Virginia. The News Leader is doing a series of articles, "One white, 1 Black, no priors," concerning the two cases.

On Wednesday in Staunton General District Court, where the appeal was heard, Staunton Commonwealth's Attorney Jeff Gaines, who appealed Truslow's bond, said, "The bond set by the magistrate was not appropriate in this case."

As detailed [in a prior article published by The News Leader](#), witnesses testified that red and green lasers began sweeping the crowd at about 7 p.m., including on the forehead of a 5-year-old boy and the belly of a pregnant woman.

The group had gathered at the apartment building to paint rocks and decorate the apartments for Halloween. One of the women who lived in the apartment building said her family is no longer staying there.

"My kids are too scared to go back home," Whitney Smith testified Wednesday.

Another witness, Jessica Folley, who is carrying twins and lives near the apartment building, said before the standoff that Truslow had walked over to the group and made small talk. During the conversation, she said Truslow briefly alluded to hearing Folley's voice sometimes during the early-morning hours, but she assured him that she's under a physician's care and is typically indoors by 8 p.m. most nights.

About 30 minutes after Truslow went home, the lasers began appearing. At one point during the commotion, Folley testified she saw Truslow lying behind a tree with a rifle pointed toward the apartment building.

"I still see beams to this day," said Folley, who noted she is now in counseling because of the ordeal.

During the standoff, the more than 20 people at the apartment building were forced by police to stay inside for several hours for their own safety. They were eventually given a police escort from the building about 30 minutes before Truslow surrendered.

According to testimony, Truslow cares for his ailing wife. In a court filing, Gaines said she is terminally ill. In the same filing, Gaines said Truslow conceded that his alcohol consumption on the night of the incident "contributed to the ensuing situation."

Truslow told authorities he was upset by the level of noise supposedly being created by his neighbors, court records indicate. However, besides the brief conversation with Folley about the sound of her voice, there was no testimony about Truslow complaining to anyone in the crowd about noise levels.

Judge Rupen Shah, who called Truslow's initial bond "unacceptable," said if not for the current COVID-19 outbreak at Middle River Regional Jail he would have placed him behind bars while awaiting trial. On Tuesday, the jail announced that nine officers and a nurse were diagnosed with coronavirus.

"I would have put you in jail because these conditions are certainly not enough," Shah said.

The judge raised the bond to \$10,000 and left it unsecured, but he ordered Truslow to undergo a mental health evaluation and to comply with any recommendations that come from the assessment. He also ordered that Truslow cannot drink alcohol while free on bond.

Following the court hearing, Shah briefly placed Truslow in custody while he completed his paperwork.

His next court hearing is scheduled for March 17.

*Have questions or a tip? Email Brad Zinn at [bzinn@newsleader.com](mailto:bzinn@newsleader.com). You can also follow him on [Twitter](#).*