



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

TODD P. GRAVES

Contact Don Ledford, Public Affairs • (816) 426-4220 • 400 East Ninth Street, Room 5510 • Kansas City, MO 64106

www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow

NOVEMBER 5, 2003
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRINCETON MAN CHARGED WITH ILLEGAL POSSESSION OF FIREARM FOLLOWING HIGHWAY PURSUIT

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a Princeton, Mo., man was charged today in federal court with being a felon in possession of a firearm.

Raymond L. Button, 73, of Princeton, Mo., was charged in a criminal complaint filed this morning in U.S. District Court in Kansas City.

In the complaint, **Button** is charged with being a felon in possession of a firearm. The criminal complaint alleges that he was in possession of a Smith and Wesson .357 caliber revolver and a Glock .40 caliber pistol on Nov. 4, 2003, in Mercer County, Mo. Under federal law, Graves explained, it is illegal for any felon to be in possession of any firearm or ammunition.

According to an affidavit filed in support of the complaint, **Button** was arrested after law enforcement responded to a well-being call at 503 Grant St., in Princeton, on Nov. 4, 2003.

Upon arriving at the residence, an officer heard a female voice yelling for help. The law enforcement officer entered the residence and found the female in a sitting chair. At that time, the female, **Button**'s wife, asked the officer to retrieve her prosthetic leg from behind the couch. As the officer went to retrieve the prosthetic leg, he was confronted by **Button**, who had a revolver pointed at the officer, the affidavit states.

Button then told the officer to put his hands up and asked the officer for his handcuffs and handcuffed him behind his back. While handcuffing the officer, **Button**'s firearm discharged and fired a bullet into a wall of the residence.

Following the shot, **Button** took the officer's service weapon and placed it into his pocket, along with three magazines and 46 rounds of ammunition. Once he obtained the firearm,

Button told the officer to sit on the couch.

The affidavit states that **Button** then told the officer that he was going to kill his wife and had her read from a Bible. He then asked the officer if his car was outside and told him that he needed to stash it somewhere.

After chaining the officer's legs, **Button** said that he was going to have to kill the law enforcement dispatcher, the affidavit states. **Button** then kissed his wife and they told each other that they loved each other and he left the residence. The officer observed **Button** get into the patrol car and leave the residence, the affidavit states.

The officer managed to free himself and was able to leave with another officer.

Button left the residence and went to the Mercer County Sheriff's Department, where he confronted the department's dispatcher and another public safety officer with the .357 revolver. **Button** told the safety officer to get down on his knees and asked if they had any handcuffs or wire to tie them up with, the affidavit states.

Shortly after, the dispatcher ran to another room and called for help. Afterward, the dispatcher noticed **Button** had left the building.

Button walked to a nearby grocery store in Princeton and made contact with an employee of the store. **Button** pointed the handgun at the employee and forced his way into the employee's vehicle and told the employee to get in the back seat, the affidavit states. After changing his mind and having the employee get in the passenger seat, **Button** began driving up US Highway 65. Law enforcement officers soon were in pursuit of the vehicle and **Button** eventually stopped at a roadblock in Iowa and placed the guns on the vehicle's dashboard. Officers then removed **Button** from the vehicle and took him into custody.

He now has been charged as a felon in possession of a firearm. **Button** has a prior criminal felony conviction for murder. He was arrested on murder charges on Nov. 25, 1952, and later received clemency by the President of the United States after being sentenced to death. His death sentence was converted to a 15-year sentence in federal prison.

Graves cautioned that the charge contained in the complaint is simply an accusation, and is not evidence of guilt. Evidence supporting the charge must be presented to a federal trial jury, whose duty is to determine guilt or innocence.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jess E. Michaelsen. It was investigated by the Mercer County, Mo., Sheriff's Department, the Grundy County, Mo., Sheriff's Department, the Missouri State Highway Patrol, the Iowa State Patrol, the Wayne County, Iowa, Sheriff's Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow