

Chester County District Attorney's Office

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NEWS RELEASE

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EXTON MAN CHARGED WITH ATTEMPTED HOMICIDE AFTER LENGTHY STANDOFF WITH POLICE

The Chester County District Attorney's Office and West Whiteland Twp Police announce the arrest of 47-year-old Christopher Smith, of Exton, for multiple counts of attempted homicide, terroristic threats, recklessly endangering another person, and related offenses. The charges stem from a tense standoff with police on Jan. 10, 2022, when they tried to execute a warrant for Smith at his residence in Exton, and he shot at law enforcement.

DA Deb Ryan said, "This was an intense and dangerous scene where law enforcement was able to diffuse a highly volatile situation. West Whiteland Twp Police, West Chester Regional Emergency Response Team, and others are commended for their professionalism. Not only did Smith endanger the lives of law enforcement, but he also jeopardized the safety of the people who live in that neighborhood. Thankfully, no one was hurt. We thank everyone involved for their assistance with this case."

West Whiteland Twp Police Chief Lee Benson said, "The professionalism, training, and patience of all the officers involved are what led to a successful conclusion to this event. Officers de-escalated this situation despite difficult conditions and kept everyone safe. The West Whiteland Twp Police Department thanks all the responding agencies involved and especially the Evian community, which was cooperative and supportive of our efforts."

The allegations in the complaint are the following¹:

On Jan. 10, 2022, West Whiteland Twp Police went to the defendant's Exton residence on Buttonwood Drive to serve a warrant. The defendant refused to exit the home, despite law enforcement's attempts to contact him via phone and public address system. When the defendant finally acknowledged the police, he threatened to shoot at them.

After the West Chester Regional Emergency Response Team (WCRERT) arrived, they formed a perimeter around the house. They began negotiating with the defendant to get him to leave the residence, but he continued to refuse. Approximately 50 police officers were deployed to the scene to assist. Officers observed the defendant pointing a long gun at the WCRERT vehicle parked in front of the residence.

Six hours after the standoff began, WCRERT attempted to deploy tactics to force the defendant out of the home. At this time, officers saw the defendant point a long gun, believed to be a rifle, in the direction of ten uniformed tactical officers. The defendant then fired two rounds in law enforcement's direction.

Shortly after, the defendant was taken into custody.

The defendant is being held at Chester County Prison after failing to post the \$500,000 bail set by Magisterial District Judge John R. Bailey. His preliminary hearing is set for Jan. 20, 2022.

West Whiteland Twp Police are investigating. ADA Kate Wright is the assigned prosecutor.

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Approved for release by Deborah Ryan, District Attorney

¹ A defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.