

Grand jury moves to indict man accused of killing "Twirp" Williams

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EDWARDSVILLE – The man accused of killing Godfrey Village Trustee Eldon “Twirp” Williams was formally indicted by a grand jury on Nov. 8, 2018.

A formal indictment is a step above being charged by the Madison County State's Attorney. A grand jury chosen and sworn by the county chose to indict Donald M. Nelson, 34, of Alton. Nelson has been accused of shooting Williams in the head and then fleeing to a nearby home. Nelson was taken into custody before Williams's body was found, after the homeowners of that nearby home contacted the Madison County Sheriff's Office for assistance after Nelson allegedly walked into their home on Oct. 16, 2018.

That grand jury indicted Nelson on all the charges given to him by the Madison County State's Attorney's Office. They are the following:

- Count I: First Degree Murder (Class M): Nelson is accused of discharging a firearm without lawful justification with the intent to kill Williams by shooting him in the head.
- Count II: First Degree Murder (Class M): Nelson is accused of discharging a firearm without lawful justification, shooting Williams in the head, knowing such an act created a strong probability of death or great harm to Williams.
- Count III: First Degree Murder (Class M): Nelson is accused of discharging a firearm without lawful justification while committing a forcible felony of armed robbery shot Williams in the head, causing death.

Madison County State's Attorney Tom Gibbons said the multiple charges of First Degree Murder were due to establishing a narrative. Each is pertaining to the same event. During the press conference following Williams's death, he said multiple charges like this make it easier to convict a person.

- Count IV: Attempted Armed Robbery (Class 1): Nelson is accused with “performing a substantial step toward the commission of that offense,” adding Nelson was armed with a firearm and tried to take property from Williams
- Count V: Criminal Trespass to a Residence (Class 4): Nelson is accused of entering the home of Cynthia Pratt and Stuart Mehl, located at 9 Rosa Ave. in Godfrey.
- Count IV: Armed Violence (Class X): Nelson is accused of being armed with a 9mm handgun while committing the felony offense of Criminal Trespass to a Residence.

- Count VII: Unlawful Possession of Weapons By a Felon (Class 2): Nelson is accused of having a 9mm handgun despite being previously convicted of Unlawful Deliver of a Controlled Substance in Illinois.
- Count VIII: Possession of a Stolen Firearm (Class 2): Nelson is accused of possessing a stolen 9mm handgun.