

Pierce County

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TEEN KILLS CAT, PLANS TO MURDER PEOPLE

Today Pierce County Prosecutor Mark Lindquist charged Matthew G. Williams, 19, with Assault in the Second Degree, Felony Harassment, Animal Cruelty in the First Degree, Unlawful Carrying or Handling of Weapons Capable of Producing Bodily Harm, Dangerous Weapons, Physical Control of a Motor Vehicle While Under the Influence, Unlawful Possession of a Controlled Substance, and Resisting Arrest.

According to charging documents, on the morning of July 8, Lakewood Police officers responded to a report of a subject passed out behind the wheel of a car that was stopped in the road. They arrived to find Williams unconscious and wearing a black mask and sunglasses. He had a pellet rifle lying across his lap. Officers had received a call earlier in the day that a person matching Williams' description had fired a pellet rifle at a man waiting at a bus stop.

Officers ordered Williams from the vehicle. He initially struggled with the officers. They were able to extract Williams from the car and detain him. Officers inspected the contents of the vehicle. The rifle was determined to be a .22 caliber air rifle. In addition to the air rifle, officers found .22 caliber firearm ammunition, a rifle scope, a large machete, and a plastic bag of marijuana in Williams' car.

After being advised of his constitutional rights, Williams told officers he had just purchased the air rifle from Walmart, mistakenly thinking it was a firearm rifle. He stated he had increasingly strong desires to murder people and had taken steps to prepare himself to commit murder by: killing birds and squirrels; identifying a particular victim type, specifically homeless people and/or "average" white men with no family connections; and watching online videos of people being tortured and killed. Williams further stated that he admired serial killers, including Ted Bundy, and wanted to kill many people.

Further investigation by the Lakewood Police Department uncovered evidence that Williams killed a family cat over the July 4th weekend while his parents were out of town. After beating the cat to death with a flashlight, he put it in a plastic bag, took it to a remote cul-de-sac and set it on fire. Police found charred debris of a cat collar. A witness reported seeing a burned cat carcass in the same location prior to it disappearing, likely taken by local wildlife. A search of Williams' bedroom uncovered a knife and a collection of graphically violent stories the defendant had written about murdering people.

These charges are only allegations. A person is presumed innocent unless and until he or she is proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in court. Williams will be arraigned at 1:30 p.m. today in the County-City Building in Tacoma.

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