

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE  
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI  
SOUTHWESTERN DIVISION**

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,**

Plaintiff,

v.

**FREDDIE LEWIS TILTON,**  
a/k/a “Ol’ boy”  
[DOB 01/21/1973]

**AMY KAY THOMAS,**  
[DOB 06/13/1983]

**JAMES B. GIBSON,**  
a/k/a “Gibby”  
[DOB 06/09/1982]

**LAWRENCE WILLIAM VAUGHAN,**  
a/k/a “Scarry Larry”  
[DOB 08/24/1971]

**RUSSELL EUGENE HURTT,**  
a/k/a “Uncle”  
[DOB 11/11/1971]

and

**CARLA JO WARD,**  
[DOB 04/17/1974]

Defendants.

**Defendants/Counts:**

TILTON: 1-5  
THOMAS: 1-4  
GIBSON: 1-4  
VAUGHAN: 1-3  
HURTT: 1-3  
WARD: 1-4

No. 21-5032-01/06-CR-SW-MDH

**COUNT 1: Conspiracy to Commit  
Kidnapping**

18 U.S.C. §§ 1201(a)(1) and (c)  
NMT Life Imprisonment  
NMT \$250,000 Fine  
NMT 5 Years Supervised Release  
Class A Felony

**COUNT 2: Kidnapping Resulting in  
Death**

18 U.S.C. §§ 1201(a)(1); 18 U.S.C. § 2  
NLT Death or Life Imprisonment  
NMT \$250,000 Fine  
NMT 5 Years Supervised Release  
Class A Felony

**COUNT 3: Use of a Firearm in  
Furtherance of a Crime of Violence  
Resulting in Murder**

18 U.S.C. §§ 924(c) and (j)(1); 18 U.S.C.  
§ 2  
NMT Death or Life Imprisonment  
NMT \$250,000 Fine  
NMT 5 Years Supervised Release  
Class A Felony

**COUNT 4: Felon in Possession of a  
Firearm**

18 U.S.C. §§ 922(g)(1) and 924(a)(2); 18  
U.S.C. § 2  
NMT 10 Years Imprisonment  
NMT \$250,000 Fine  
NMT 3 Years Supervised Release  
Class C Felony

**COUNT 5: Felon in Possession of a  
Firearm**

18 U.S.C. §§ 922(g)(1) and 924(a)(2); 18  
U.S.C. § 2  
NMT 10 Years Imprisonment

NMT \$250,000 Fine  
NMT 3 Years Supervised Release  
Class C Felony  
  
Restitution  
\$100 Special Assessment per Felony Count

**INDICTMENT**

**THE GRAND JURY CHARGES THAT:**

**COUNT 1**

(Conspiracy to Commit Kidnapping)

Between on or about July 4, 2020, and continuing through July 29, 2020, said dates being approximate, in Newton County, and elsewhere in the Western District of Missouri, the defendants, **FREDDIE LEWIS TILTON, AMY KAY THOMAS, JAMES B. GIBSON, LAWRENCE WILLIAM VAUGHAN, RUSSELL EUGENE HURTT, and CARLA JO WARD**, did voluntarily and intentionally combine, confederate, agree, and conspire with each other, and others unknown and known to the Grand Jury, to unlawfully and willfully seize, confine, inveigle, decoy, kidnap, abduct, and hold for ransom, reward, or otherwise, the victim M.H., and in the course of such conduct the defendants used the mail or any means, facility, or instrumentality of interstate or foreign commerce in committing, or in furtherance of the commission of, the offense, all in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1201(a)(1) and (c).

**Overt Acts**

In furtherance of the conspiracy to commit kidnapping, the defendants committed and caused to be committed the following overt acts, among others, in the Western District of Missouri and elsewhere:

1. On or about July 4, 2020, through July 6, 2020, HURTT sent text messages, through a cellular phone, to R.B. demanding R.B. provide the name of a male who drove a Dodge truck who assisted her and E.C. to take back a camper that TILTON had stolen from E.C. HURTT informed R.B. through text messages that people who helped take the trailer back from TILTON were going to get hurt and probably killed, and R.B. might be one of the individuals hurt or killed. HURTT told R.B. she needed to tell him where he could find the male or his name. R.B. finally disclosed, "All I know he said his name was mike and he was a brother or honky." HURTT conveyed that "Ol boy said u need to call him and talk to him on the phone cause ur looking guilty and hiding stuff" and that R.B. needed to "get that dude to meet u somewhere where he can get him or find out where he can find him thats bottom line." HURTT continued to text message R.B. July 9, 2020, and July 12, 2020, indicating that "this shit aint going to stop just keep getting worse" until E.C. and the male were caught by TILTON. Mike was identified as the victim, M.H.
2. On July 5, 2020, HURTT sent a message via Facebook Messenger to TILTON asking if TILTON wanted HURTT to find "Mike" and TILTON stated "yes."
3. On July 5, 2020, TILTON sent a message through Facebook Messenger to M.H. stating, "Whats up let's finish this. That was lame what you did yesterday I wasn't impressed at all see when I look her rv I called her and told her I took it and why I toke her shit because. She goes and puts money jarmy. Dills books the same one that was talking to thee fbi trying to set me up. So why you trying to help a rat. you crossed a line there for you will be punished I would have had respect for you if you wodnt have got scared and ran dragjng the rv when you knew I was coming run little scared punk run I will find you you picked the right one."
4. On July 7, 2020, TILTON posted comments on his Facebook profile page under the profile name "Freddie TILTON" to M.H. TILTON posted, "Whats up tough guy were you hiding?" M.H. replied, "In your backyard. Get your Binoculars out." TILTON then posted, "Well I don't see you come out and face me like a man." TILTON noted that M.H. "fucked up" and he would not stop till he got him.
5. On July 8, 2020, TILTON sent messages through Facebook Messenger to R.B. stating, "see you are friends with M.H." and "Im going to shot him in the face when I catch him. he fucked up." On July 8, 2020, WARD sent a message to TILTON through Facebook Messenger stating, "Hey check it out here is that piece of shit (M.H.) location I was able to reel him in so far." WARD attached a screen shot of a map location.
6. On July 14, 2020, WARD picked M.H. up from Joplin, Missouri, and took him to VAUGHAN's residence in Newton County, Missouri. WARD contacted VAUGHAN using her cellular phone to advise she had "company." WARD sent text messages to TILTON advising she had M.H. On July 14, 2020, WARD sent a message to TILTON through Facebook Messenger stating, "Get here I've got M.H."

7. On or about July 14, 2020, VAUGHAN sent a text message to TILTON stating, "Call me quickly handing [M.H.] to you."
8. On or about July 15, 2020, at 12:59:33 a.m. (UTC-5), VAUGHAN sent a text message to TILTON that read, "He's got 2 guns." At 2:15:10 a.m. (UTC-5), VAUGHAN sent a text message to TILTON that stated, "OK we've got both his guns put up." At 3:42:20 a.m. (UTC-5), VAUGHAN sent a text message to TILTON that read, "Guns are secure I'm waiting for you at the bridge."
9. On or about July 15, 2020, THOMAS, GIBSON, and TILTON responded to VAUGHAN's residence in the early morning hours. TILTON, THOMAS, and GIBSON bound M.H.'s hands with handcuffs and duct tape were placed arounds his mouth and other parts of his body. THOMAS cut M.H. repeatedly with a knife and GIBSON beat M.H. with a club. TILTON shot M.H. in the head. These acts were conducted in VAUGHAN and WARD's presence, as well as others known and unknown to the Grand Jury. TILTON, THOMAS, GIBSON, VAUGHAN, and WARD cleaned up the blood and damage created during the assault and shooting of M.H. The defendants wrapped M.H.'s body in plastic wrap and transported it to HURTT's property located in Newton County in a black BMW utilized by TILTON.
10. On or about July 15, 2020, at 11:11:42 p.m. (UTC-5), TILTON sent a text message to VAUGHAN that read, "You good my friend." At 11:16:12 p.m. (UTC-5), VAUGHAN responded, "Were good goon need a dining room set had a few." The message continues at 11:17:25 p.m., "Holes in it so I burnt the whole thing figure with refinishing the floors it will look better anyway."
11. On or about July 16, 2020, at 4:35:16 a.m. (UTC-5), VAUGHAN sent a text message to TILTON that read, "Everyone is good. Need a couple gallons of paint along with the reward for that one. Damn sprayed bleach on the blue Nd it turned lime green."
12. On July 28, 2020, law enforcement executed a search warrant for HURTT's property based on information that a deceased body was located on the acreage. Upon attempting to contact occupants of the residence, TILTON fired multiple shots from inside the residence at law enforcement prior to being apprehended. Law enforcement located M.H.'s deceased body approximately 100 to 150 yards away from the residence on the property.

**COUNT 2**  
(Kidnapping Resulting in Death)

Between on or about July 4, 2020, and continuing through July 29, 2020, said dates being approximate, in Newton County, and elsewhere in the Western District of Missouri, the defendants, **FREDDIE LEWIS TILTON, AMY KAY THOMAS, JAMES B. GIBSON, LAWRENCE WILLIAM VAUGHAN, RUSSELL EUGENE HURTT, and CARLA JO WARD**, aiding and abetting each other, and others unknown and known to the Grand Jury, did unlawfully and willfully seize, confine, inveigle, decoy, kidnap, abduct, and hold for ransom, reward, or otherwise, M.H., and in the course of such conduct the defendants used the mail or any means, facility, or instrumentality of interstate or foreign commerce in committing or in furtherance of the commission of the offense, and such conduct did result in the death of M.H., all in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 2 and 1201(a)(1) and (c).

**COUNT 3**  
(Use of a Firearm in Furtherance of a Crime of Violence Resulting in Murder)

Between on or about July 14, 2020, and continuing through July 15, 2020, said dates being approximate, in Newton County, and elsewhere in the Western District of Missouri, the defendants, **FREDDIE LEWIS TILTON, AMY KAY THOMAS, JAMES B. GIBSON, LAWRENCE WILLIAM VAUGHAN, RUSSELL EUGENE HURTT, and CARLA JO WARD**, aiding and abetting each other, and others unknown and known to the Grand Jury, did, during and in relation to a crime of violence for which the defendant may be prosecuted in a court of the United States, that is, aiding and abetting kidnapping resulting in death, as alleged in Count 2 of this Indictment, incorporated herein, knowingly used, carried, brandished, and discharged a firearm and in doing so, committed murder, as defined in Title 18 U.S.C. Section 1111, that is the

unlawful killing of M.H., with malice aforethought, said murder being deliberate, premeditated, and committed in the perpetration of, and attempt to perpetrate, a kidnapping of M.H., all in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 2 and 924(c) and (j)(1).

**COUNT 4**

(Felon in Possession of a Firearm)

Between on or about July 14, 2020, and continuing through July 19, 2020, said dates being approximate, in Newton County, and elsewhere in the Western District of Missouri, the defendants, **FREDDIE LEWIS TILTON, AMY KAY THOMAS, JAMES B. GIBSON,** and **CARLA JO WARD**, aiding and abetting each other, knowing they had previously been convicted of a crime punishable by imprisonment for a term exceeding one year, knowingly possessed a firearm and ammunition, and the firearm and ammunition were in and affecting commerce, all in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 2, 922(g)(1), and 924(a)(2).

**COUNT 5**

(Felon in Possession of a Firearm)

Between on or about July 28, 2020, said date being approximate, in Newton County, and elsewhere in the Western District of Missouri, the defendant, **FREDDIE LEWIS TILTON**, knowing he had previously been convicted of a crime punishable by imprisonment for a term exceeding one year, knowingly possessed firearms, to wit:

1. Rigarmi Model 53 .25 caliber pistol, serial number 56066;
2. Ithaca .22 caliber rifle, serial number 19130AT;
3. Remington .22 rifle, serial number removed;
4. Harrington and Richardson 12-gauge shotgun, serial number N2729467;
5. Ruger Security-9, 9mm handgun, serial number 383-33025; and

6. Taurus Millennium PT111 G2, 9mm handgun, serial number removed;  
and the firearms and ammunition were in and affecting commerce, all in violation of Title 18,  
United States Code, Sections 922(g)(1) and 924(a)(2).

**A TRUE BILL**

*/s/ Monica Stone*

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FOREPERSON OF THE GRAND JURY

*/s/ Ami Miller*

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**AMI HARSHAD MILLER #57711**  
Assistant United States Attorney

DATED: 7/28/2021  
Springfield, Missouri