

**STATE OF WISCONSIN      CIRCUIT COURT      LA CROSSE COUNTY**

STATE OF WISCONSIN

Plaintiff,

vs.

Tessa R Haller



Sex/Race: F/W  
Eye Color: Green  
Hair Color: Blonde  
Height: 5 ft 5 in  
Weight: 126 lbs  
Alias:

Defendant.

DA Case No.: 2024LC000263  
Assigned DA/ADA: Tim Gruenke  
Agency Case No.: 10-24-01950  
Court Case No.:  
ATN: 32000000552754

**CRIMINAL COMPLAINT**

**Sergeant Brandon Penzkover, La Crosse County Sheriff's Department, being first duly sworn on oath says that on information and belief:**

**Count 1: ATTEMPTED FIRST DEGREE INTENTIONAL HOMICIDE - PTAC, AS A PARTY TO A CRIME**

The above-named defendant on or about Sunday, January 14, 2024, at George Street, in the City of La Crosse, La Crosse County, Wisconsin, as a party to a crime, attempted to cause the death of GLW, with intent to kill that person or another, contrary to sec. 940.01(1)(a), 939.50(3)(a), 939.32, 939.05 Wis. Stats., a Class B Felony, and upon conviction may be sentenced to a term of imprisonment not to exceed sixty (60) years.

**and prays that the defendant be dealt with according to law; that the basis for complainant's charge of such offense is:**

**FACTUAL BASIS:**

Inv. Tolvstad of the La Crosse Police Department states that on 01/14/2024, officers responded to a shots fired call at the Vogue Bar, 1820 George Street in the City and County of La Crosse. It was reported that GLW was at Mayo Hospital and was shot in the leg. GLW had initially indicated that he was out back of the Vogue and was shot but did not see who shot him.

Inv. Tolvstad was able to review surveillance video from the Vogue bar and was able to identify numerous people inside the bar including GLW, Lenell Carter, Tessa Haller, DH, and several other individuals known to him from previous contacts. While reviewing the video, he initially saw Lenell Carter in the exterior rear of the bar where he appeared to be walking around upset as he was stomping his feet and making movements with his hands. He also appeared to have something in his hand. He was out back with his girlfriend, Tessa Haller, who was wearing a white puffy coat and had red hair. Inv. Tolvstad was later able to confirm from Tessa Haller's Facebook that she recently changed her hair color to red. Inv. Tolvstad was familiar with Lenell Carter and Tessa Haller from previous investigations.

On the surveillance footage, Inv. Tolvstad was able to see GLW come in the front door of the Vogue and appear to wipe his knuckles off after what appeared to be an altercation. GLW then stayed in the bar for several minutes and there did not seem to be any problems inside. He then saw GLW walk out back with DH and again there were no problems. He did not see any weapons or objects in GLW's hand. At that time, an individual runs from north of the bar in between the Vogue and the house next to the Vogue. Inv. Tolvstad then saw a muzzle flash and GLW is shot in the leg. GLW walked back into the bar where he alerted everyone that he had just been shot.

Inv. Tolvstad ran a criminal history on both Tessa Haller and Lenell Carter and learned that Tessa Haller is on probation and Lenell Carter is a convicted felon and unable to possess firearms.

On 01/15/2024, Inv. Tolvstad made contact at the La Crosse County Jail with GLW. GLW indicated that he initially did not know who had shot him. Inv. Tolvstad asked him if he wanted to press charges for this as Inv. Tolvstad was able to see the individual he was fighting with was Lenell Carter. As Inv. Tolvstad was speaking with him he would wince in pain anytime he had to use his injured leg. He then confirmed to Inv. Tolvstad that the person that he did fight with was Lenell Carter and that Lenell Carter was with a girl. He stated that Lenell Carter and another bald black male with patchy skin jumped him and he fought them off and went back in the bar and used a napkin to wipe the blood off his hand. He describe the male as tall, 6'3-6'4, heavysset with white patches on his skin.

Inv. Tolvstad asked him why Lenell Carter would be upset with him. He stated that about four or five months ago, he called Lenell "gay" and Lenell was still upset with him. He stated that once he went back to the bar, there wasn't any more problems and he never saw Lenell in the bar. GLW advised that he wasn't in the bar that long and he didn't know why Lenell would still be upset with him. Inv. Tolvstad asked GLW who shot him. He stated he did not see 100 percent who shot him in the alley as there was a truck in the way. Inv. Tolvstad questioned GLW on the truck and he was adamant there was a truck in between him and the shooter. Inv. Tolvstad asked him if there was anybody else out there during the shooting, and he stated nobody else was out in the walkway between the bar and house.

Inv. Tolvstad asked GLW if he stabbed Lenell Carter as initial information stated there was a knife involved. GLW stated that he had a knife but he did not stab him. He only punched Lenell Carter. He told Inv. Tolvstad to look at his knife and it was clean. Inv. Tolvstad asked him who else would have shot at him besides Lenell Carter and GLW replied, "nobody."

GLW reiterated that if Law Enforcement found the individual who was responsible for this that he would like to pursue charges. He advised if he heard any new information or remembered anything else, he would contact Inv. Tolvstad.

Inv. Tolvstad reviewed surveillance video of the front exterior, inside, and rear exterior of The Vogue. He noted the following important points.

At 23:06, GLW is standing outside the front of the bar and appeared to be smoking a cigarette in a white sweatshirt and black vest.

At 23:08:35, Lenell Carter and Tessa Haller arrive in a grey van. The van stops in the road, lets them out, and they walk towards the front of the bar.

At 23:08:52, Lenell Carter walked towards the front of the bar and was immediately struck in the face by GLW. GLW then pushed him back after striking him in the face with his hand. Lenell Carter immediately grabbed for Tessa Haller's red purse looking to get an object out of the purse. He was unable to initially get it out. He took the purse, ran across the road, and GLW walked back inside the bar.

At 23:09:26, Lenell Carter drops the bag on the side of the road and runs across the street towards the bar with both of his hands in his pockets and walks to the front of the bar. He then walked north of the bar in between the bar and the house towards the Vogue parking lot which was covered by Vogue video.

At 23:10:41, Lenell Carter again emerges from the north side of the bar onto the front sidewalk again with his hand in his pocket.

At 23:11:06, Inv. Tolvstad was able to observe Lenell Carter standing in front of the bar looking inside a front window. As he turns, he is holding his arm down to his side and then he turns into the light. At that time, Inv. Tolvstad was able to see what appears to be a gun in his right hand. Lenell then walks across the street with Tessa Haller. He was still holding what appeared to be a firearm in his right hand. After getting over to the west side of George Street, Lenell Carter immediately walks back over towards the front of the bar with his hands again inside of his jacket pockets. His left hand appears to be free, and his right hand is in the front pocket. He appears to be spitting like an individual who had been struck in the face and was spitting blood. At this time, he is wearing blue jeans, a grey coat, grey vest with black sleeves on it, and his hood up. These are the same clothes he was wearing in the video from the rear of the bar.



At 23:12:09, he continues to peek into the front windows and then has a conversation with Tessa Haller out front and another individual.

At 23:14:06, Tessa Haller walks in front door of bar. Lenell Carter looks in the front window and immediately starts jogging to the north. He runs in between the Vogue and the residence to the north of the Vogue towards the back-alley parking lot area.

At 23:14:23, Inv. Tolvstad was then able to observe Lenell Carter running out front the alley across the road northbound towards the church on the corner of George Street and North Street. He then runs out of view. At this time, Tessa Haller remained in the bar.

Inv. Tolvstad states he was clearly able to observe the front of the bar during the incident and the rear of the bar during the incident on surveillance footage. He can clearly observe Lenell Carter in the front of the exterior of bar and then run towards the back. At that time DH and GLW had exited the rear of the bar. Inv. Tolvstad was able to see several shots fired in the footage of the rear exterior of the bar. Several seconds later, Lenell Carter can be seen leaving the walkway in between the front exterior of

the bar and the residence next to it. During that time, no one else left the front or the rear of the alley and Lenell Carter is the only individual seen entering and exiting in that timeframe.

Lenell Carter then fled northwest and has not been located as of the time this complaint was drafted.

**Additionally, your complainant is informed by excerpts of a supplement report of Investigator Tolvstad as follows:**

CONTACT WITH TESSA HALLER:

On January 23, 2024, I attempted to make contact with Tessa Haller at her residence at [REDACTED] in La Crosse. I left a message at her house to have Tessa call me back, which she did approximately an hour later.

At around 10:15 p.m., Tessa came into the police department for an interview. I placed Tessa into Interview Room #1, where I activated my body camera and began the interview. I read Tessa her Miranda Rights and she completed a La Crosse Police Department Miranda Rights Form, which I added to this report. Tessa indicated that she has been hanging out or talking to Lenell Carter but that she still lives with the father of her children on [REDACTED]. She stated they have been hanging out or talking, which I later clarified as dating, since June 2023 and that she met him while doing a flooring construction job.

Tessa then went into what happened the night of the shooting. She stated that her birthday was on January 12, 2024 and that they did not go out. However, on January 14, 2024, Lenell asked her to go out with him to celebrate her birthday. Tessa said she had two glasses of wine prior to going to the vogue. She was initially hesitant, but later agreed to go out for her birthday. Tessa stated that she and Lenell took an Uber to the Vogue Bar. She got out of the rear of the van and Lenell got out of the other side of the rear of the van. She stated when she was walking up to the bar, a male that she knew by the nickname of "Tre Ball," with the last name of [W], jumped out at Lenell and punched him in the mouth. She stated Lenell was hit in the mouth and was bleeding and was walking around, upset about being punched. She knew that Lenell and GLW had a previous beef or altercation, where GLW had called Lenell a "fagg" or "queer" and that they fought in a bar several months ago. Tessa said that after Lenell was hit he ran away from the bar.

Tessa talked to Lenell the next day and Lenell asked her what she heard was going on? She asked him if he killed or shot anyone and Lenell told her, "No." Tessa said she did not think Lenell would admit anything to her because he thinks she wants her old boyfriend back. Tessa said that Lenell was crying and saying that he messed up.

She then stated that Lenell was walking around still upset and said that he had lost his chain. She went around looking for his chain, walked into the bar, and told Lenell's sister, Keona, that GLW had punched Lenell. She then stated that she walked outside, Lenell was gone, and she got a ride home from Keona's husband.

She confirmed she was romantically involved with Lenell Carter and that when Lenell was outside yelling, he was upset with GLW and stated something to the effect of "Where is he! I'm going to kill," she corrected herself by saying, "My Teeth, my teeth, they are gone." I found during my interview that Tessa was very detailed about every aspect of the night except for when I asked her questions about the firearm. She would then pause, look up to the left, not make eye contact with me, and appeared to not be telling me the complete truth.

After she had given her first account of the incident, I asked her what happened in between the punch and Lenell running off. She could not remember and paused. I then asked again, "what happened right after Lenell was punched?" She again paused and then stated that "he grabbed my purse." I asked,

"What for?" Tessa started speaking loud, put her hands in the air and stated, "I swear to god on everything I love." She then kept talking and stated that he ripped the purse off her shoulder. She avoided answering the question about what was in the purse and by her answer it appeared as what she knew what I was asking for. She said that there was nothing in her purse and she didn't know why he grabbed it. When I asked her about the gun she became very animated and appeared to be almost over the top animated.

I asked her if she was carrying the firearm for Lenell that night. She indicated that she was not and that Lenell might have put the firearm in her purse without her knowledge, however, she did not see Lenell grab the firearm out of the purse. She stated that there was not a gun in her purse. She then maybe he put something else in her purse to go with the gun. Tessa stated that she has never observed Lenell with a gun.

I explained the video to her and explained that you can see Lenell get punched in the face and immediately walk over to her purse, which is not a common reaction by any individual who was just struck in the face, go across the street, drop the purse in the street, and then come over with an object in his right hand in his pocket. As he gets in front of the bar, I am able to see the firearm in the video and I am able to see Tessa standing out front, talking with him, and appear to be planning or assisting him. She walked in the bar several times and appeared to be looking for GLW and even walked to the back, looking around the back parking lot. During this time, I am clearly able to see the firearm in Lenell's right hand and she is within 5 to 10-feet away, standing with him outside by themselves. I asked her how she thought that would look to individuals viewing the video and she paused and said something similar to, "It looks like I'm guilty as hell." She was adamant she did not know if Lenell put a firearm in her purse or not, however, when I talked to her about seeing the firearm in front of the bar, she paused numerous times and stated she did not see the firearm. I asked if she went out looking in the back for GLW and she stated no and that she was looking for Lenell's chain. I asked her why she would be looking for his chain when the fight occurred in the front. She stated that he walked back there and it could have been back there. It should be noted, no officers located a chain in the front or back of the bar. At this time Tessa requested a lawyer and I ceased all questioning.

I advised Tessa of the search warrant for her DNA and I collected her DNA at 11:07 p.m. The buccal swab was later placed into evidence. She was provided a copy of the warrant.

Tessa is romantically involved with Lenell and it appeared as if she did not want to get him in any trouble. She was taken to the La Crosse County Jail on a probation warrant. I confirmed with the district attorney's office and later completed a booking form for the above charge. Tessa made several phone calls at the police department to secure childcare.

Subscribed and sworn to before me on 01/25/24

Electronically Signed By:

Electronically Signed By:

Deputy Peter Sloan

Jasmine Betancourt

Complainant

Assistant District Attorney

State Bar #: 1102839