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Man who was shot paranoid, uncle says He thought children were being poisoned, according to relative

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Article Text:

Man who was shot paranoid, uncle says

He thought children were being poisoned, according to relative

The man critically injured by Milwaukee police in a gunfight Thursday night believed the government was out to get him and that teachers were poisoning his children, his uncle said.

The man, 36, was charged in July with failing to get his children to school.

He was directed to see a psychiatrist on Monday by the court as part of the truancy case but refused to go, said his uncle. His uncle, who works for the Hmong American Friendship Association, was planning to take the man to the appointment. It was the latest in a string of disturbing behavior by the man. The uncle said he thought his nephew suffered from paranoia. "I thought something was going to happen some day," the uncle said.

A social worker went Thursday to the man's house, in the 2900 block of W. St. Paul Ave., to check on the welfare of the man and his wife's three children, ages 9, 10, and 11, as part of an on-going investigation, but encountered a locked gate, said Denise Revels Robinson, director of the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare. The social worker called police.

After a different family member told police the man was mentally unstable and had guns in the house, commanders summoned the Tactical Enforcement Unit, said Deputy Chief Brian O'Keefe. A department negotiator attempted to contact the man for three hours, but there was no response, O'Keefe said.

O'Keefe said that "because of the concern for the safety of the children and mother," at 9 p.m. the decision was made to forcibly enter the house. As officers burst through the door, the man fired a handgun but did not hit officers, O'Keefe said. The man's wife, 47, and children were on the second floor, he said.

Three officers, all in their 30s, returned fire, striking the man. O'Keefe declined to name the officers or to say how many times the man was hit or whether other guns were found in the house. Following standard procedure, the officers have been put on administrative duty while the case is investigated.

The bureau placed the children in foster care, Revels Robinson said.

O'Keefe said the man was in critical but stable condition Friday at Froedtert Memorial Lutheran Hospital in Wauwatosa.

The family lives off disability checks for the mother and one of the children, the uncle said.

The children were kept home from school earlier this year because the couple feared their

children were being poisoned, the uncle said.

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