



# Muskingum County Prosecutor's Office

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Zanesville man sentenced to prison for bar riot

A Zanesville man at the center of two separate drug-related disturbances involving firearms at local bars was sentenced to prison Tuesday.

Tristan Gebhart, 32, pleaded guilty to one third-degree felony count of illegal possession of a firearm in a liquor permit establishment, one third-degree felony count of violation of a protection order, one fifth-degree felony count of aggravated riot and one first-degree felony count of assault. Gebhart was sentenced by Judge Mark Flegle to four years and 11 months in prison.

Detectives who investigated both matters learned that Gebhart was involved in an ongoing dispute with Eric "Weezy" Gibbons. The dispute erupted into a fight on April 3 at the Putnam Tavern on Putnam Avenue when Gebhart attacked Gibbons from behind. Both men were armed at the time, and both men produced handguns which were subsequently taken from them by other patrons.

No one called the police with regard to that incident. Lead detective James Devoll learned of it after investigating a later violent disturbance on April 8 in which Gebhart appeared at Terrys Tavern on Linden Avenue. At the time, Gebhart was subject to a protection order which prohibited him from possessing a firearm. At the bar, he got into a physical altercation with a female associate of Gibbons concerning the ongoing drug-related dispute.

When a patron confronted Gebhart for shoving a woman, Gebhart sucker-punched that patron, who is seen on video falling to the ground and then standing up to strike Gebhart with a bottle. The entire bar then erupted into a fight. During this altercation, Gebhart was seen on video removing not one, but two firearms from his clothing and handing one of those guns off to bar staff and another to the girlfriend of a separate, uninvolved, local drug dealer.

After the fight was over, and after being told to leave, Gebhart retrieved one of his guns and demanded the second with gun-in-hand. He fled police and hid the guns behind a local business.

Other individuals, uninvolved in the situation joined the fight, resulting in still pending charges of felony aggravated riot against Reese Tabler, Galand Lewis and Tyler Kirkbride.

In Ohio, an unlicensed person cannot possess a firearm in a liquor permit premises. Additionally, in Ohio, where four or more people engage in actions which would otherwise be disorderly conduct, and those persons demonstrate a purpose to either cause physical harm, or are armed with a deadly weapon, the crime is a felony.

"Mr. Gebhart's sentence reflects the seriousness of his actions, which are unacceptable in decent society, but it also reflects his immediate acceptance of responsibility when caught, and the fact that he has no criminal history," said Assistant Prosecutor John Litle, who handled the case.

Gibbons faces trial for possessing a firearm in a liquor permit premises in August. Garland Lewis remains on the list of Muskingum County Most Wanted.

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