

- [Print This](#)

- [Email This](#)

Teens face charges in highway shootings

- **January 26th, 2010**

- (12) comments

By David Johnson of the Tribune

One bullet passed between driver and passenger; Friday gunfire closed State Highway 8 for several hours

MOSCOW - Austin Blake Medlock and Austin James Rickert, both 14-year-old freshmen at Deary High School, allegedly used two .22-caliber rifles and a crossbow Friday afternoon to shoot at vehicles, according to court records.

Several chip trucks and cars were struck, including one vehicle where a bullet reportedly went through the driver's side headrest and passed between the driver and a passenger, according to a probable-cause affidavit filed in 2nd District Court here Monday.

Handcuffed and shackled at the ankles, Medlock and Rickert appeared in juvenile court late Monday morning with their parents before Magistrate John Judge. Because of the public nature of the allegations, Judge ordered the court records open to the public after the closed hearing. Another hearing in juvenile court was scheduled for 11 a.m. Feb. 3.

The boys are charged with two counts each of being principal to the unlawful discharge of a firearm at a vehicle. The charges allege the boys both fired shots or aided and abetted each other.

They allegedly discharged the weapons, according to court records, from a tri-level wooden fort near the highway shielded by trees. Authorities, according to records, found multiple spent .22 casings and evidence linked to a crossbow arrow that ended up in the trailer of a chip truck, according to the affidavit.

One vehicle, according to the charging portion of the juvenile petition, was driven by McKenna Dorendorf. She and her sister, Haley Dorendorf, were in the car where the bullet reportedly passed between them, according to the probable-cause affidavit.

State Highway 8 was closed for about three hours Friday afternoon after reports of multiple shots being heard and numerous vehicles being hit. The first report, according to records, came from a Jack Buell truck driver who reported his tractor-trailer being hit shortly before 1 p.m. Several additional reports came in that shots were being fired in the Helmer area east of Deary. Then another Buell driver reported his tractor-trailer had been hit three times, according to records.

Thomas Thompson, still another chip truck driver, reported his rig had been struck by a crossbow bolt (arrow), which was found lodged in his trailer. Authorities took the arrow as evidence, according to reports.

Mark McNeilly, who lives on Forks Road, reported he had been hearing small pops like gunshots all afternoon. Authorities checked a nearby residence where the fort was found, according to the probable-cause affidavit. The property is owned by David Rickert, according to the affidavit. He is the grandfather of Austin Rickert.

Latah County sheriff's deputies eventually made contact with Austin Rickert, according to records, around 5:30 p.m. He told authorities he and Medlock got up early to go coyote hunting. The two returned to the property, climbed onto the fort and started shooting, according to the report.

"Austin (Rickert) told me that the two started to shoot at the chip-truck trailers because they knew nobody would be inside the trailers," Cpl. Mike Neelon wrote in a probable-cause affidavit. "Austin said that Medlock eventually picked up the crossbow and fired a bolt into a chip-truck trailer. Later, Medlock would fire at a passenger vehicle. Austin said he told Medlock not to fire at cars because there was a concern about hitting the people in the vehicles."

The boys, according to records, allegedly used a .22-caliber semiautomatic rifle and a .22-caliber bolt action rifle, along with the crossbow.

Around 3 p.m., according to the affidavit, the boys left the fort and went to basketball practice at Deary High School, passing through a roadblock authorities had set up in response to the shootings.

Deary High School Principal Darah Eggers said the incident "shocked" everyone at the school and that there had been no "red flags" indicating the boys were capable of the allegations against them. He said the school also made a crisis team available to students Saturday and that the situation has shaken the entire community.

Austin Rickert was arrested first and taken to the Latah County Jail. About two hours later, according to records, Austin Medlock was contacted by authorities. But his mother said the family had contacted an attorney and refused to let the boy be interviewed, according to the affidavit.

Over the objection of Latah County Deputy Prosecutor Judith Potter, Judge allowed both boys to be released from jail Monday to their parents. Conditions of their release include that neither leave the sight of one of their parents, that all guns be removed from their homes, that they not touch a firearm, that the parents take them to and from school, that they both wear electronic monitoring devices, and that they agree to be searched at any time by authorities.

Public defenders Charles Kovic and Jay Johnson have been assigned to represent Medlock and Rickert, respectively. The cases were assigned to go before Magistrate Steve Calhoun after Monday's hearing.

Johnson may be contacted at djohnson@lmtribune.com or (208) 883-0564.