

STATE OF MINNESOTA
COUNTY OF HENNEPIN

DISTRICT COURT
FOURTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT
PROBATE/MENTAL HEALTH DIVISION

Court File No. 27-CR-23-1886

State of Minnesota,
Plaintiff,

v.

Matthew David Guertin,
Defendant.

**FINDINGS OF FACT,
CONCLUSIONS OF LAW, AND
ORDER REGARDING
COMPETENCY TO PROCEED**

The above-entitled matter came before the district court, on July 7, 2023, for an evidentiary hearing regarding the Defendant's competency. The hearing took place in person in Courtroom 456 at the Hennepin County Government Center. Jacqueline Perez, Assistant Hennepin County Attorney, appeared for the State. The Defendant appeared along with his attorney, Bruce Rivers, Esq. Jill E. Rogstad, Ph.D., LP, ABPP (Forensic), Senior Clinical Forensic Psychologist at the Fourth Judicial District Court, testified at the hearing and the court received into evidence her *Curriculum Vitae* (Exhibit 2), and her Forensic Evaluation Report dated March 10, 2023 (Exhibit 3). The court also received into evidence a copy of United States Patent No. 11,577,177 B2 dated February 14, 2023 (Exhibit 1), as well as testimony from the Defendant.

The matter was referred for hearing to the undersigned district court referee, who after considering the evidence, the arguments presented, and all the files and records herein, reports to the court making the following recommended Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law and Order:

1. Defendant is currently **INCOMPETENT** to proceed.

FINDINGS OF FACT

The Defendant, Matthew David Guertin, is charged in MNCIS file 27-CR-23-1886 with Dangerous Weapons-Reckless Discharge of Firearm Within a Municipality (Felony), Firearm-

Serial Number-Receive/Possess With No Serial Number (Felony), Firearm-Serial Number-Receive/Possess With No Serial Number (Felony), and Firearm-Serial Number-Receive/Possess With No Serial Number (Felony), from an incident alleged to have occurred on January 21, 2023. On January 25, 2023, the Honorable Lyonel Norris, Referee of District Court, found probable cause to believe that the offenses were committed and that Defendant committed them. He then ordered that a Rule 20.01 evaluation be completed. Jill E. Rogstad, Ph.D., LP, ABPP (Forensic), was assigned to complete the evaluation of the Defendant. She filed her report on March 10, 2023, opining that Mr. Guertin is incompetent and provided the following diagnoses:

Unspecified Schizophrenia Spectrum and Other Psychotic Disorder (primary).

Mr. Guertin challenges Dr. Rogstad's conclusion, taking the position that he is competent to proceed in his criminal matters. Mr. Guertin testified that he is currently employed as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of a start-up company. His company is listed as the assignee on United States Patent No. 11,577,177 B2, and he, as an individual, is listed as the inventor and the applicant. *Ex. 1.* Mr. Guertin testified that he understands his charges, noting that reckless discharge of a firearm in a municipality is a felony with a maximum of a two-year sentence. He notes that he and his attorney have discussed possible defenses; that he understands the information relayed to him by his attorney; and that there is nothing impeding their relationship. In fact, Mr. Guertin and his attorney, Mr. Rivers, have had a professional relationship for many years. Mr. Guertin also admitted to having been through criminal proceedings in the past. While he acknowledged that he may not understand all the technicalities of criminal proceedings, he indicates that he would ask his attorney if he had questions about the proceedings. Mr. Guertin appeared well-dressed, noting that he wore a tie to court "to be presentable." He presents as intelligent and passionate about his work with technology, including his patent. However, much of his testimony was focused on his

technological work and patent, and he required frequent redirection to stay on point. In fact, there were times during his testimony that Mr. Guertin became lost in his answer to a question because of rambling statements about his patent or other unrelated topics. For instance, when discussing the events that led to what he describes as the “most cordial standoff ever” [with the police], Mr. Guertin began discussing his actions in firing his gun in order to attract the police. He did so instead of calling 911 because he could not trust his electronic devices due to his suspicions involving Netflix and Microsoft and protection of his patent. The court appreciates Mr. Guertin’s testimony and his participation in the hearing; however, the court has serious concerns regard Mr. Guertin’s ability to meaningfully participate in criminal proceedings and understand the process, given his perseveration regarding his patent, and his delusional beliefs about others.

Dr. Rogstad opines that Mr. Guertin is not competent to proceed in his criminal matters, concluding in her report “...that Mr. Guertin’s symptoms presently compromise his capacity to understand rationally the proceedings, participate in the defense, and consult rationally with counsel.” Ex. 3, p. 9. Dr. Rogstad offers a diagnosis of Unspecified Schizophrenia Spectrum and Other Psychotic Disorder (primary). While Dr. Rogstad testified that this is a legitimate diagnosis, she indicated that additional information would be needed to provide more specificity. Dr. Rogstad notes that Mr. Guertin “...displays prominent delusional beliefs that include persecutory and referential themes,” the content and intensity of which “...are highly consistent with phenomenology of the persecutory delusions that can accompany psychotic disorders.” *Id.* at 7. She further indicates that Mr. Guertin may also suffer from a mood-related disorder, namely mania or hypomania, given “...his frequent digressions and tendency to become distracted by his own thoughts,” which “...were consistent with flight of ideas.” *Id.* at 8. She also notes that Mr. Guertin was “highly distractible” during the examination, making it “...difficult to extract meaningful,

coherent information from him.” *Id.* The court observed identical behavior during his testimony on July 7, 2023, to that exhibited during his examination. Dr. Rogstad testified that misuse¹ of Adderall could account for some of Mr. Guertin’s symptoms, but acknowledged that she was not a toxicologist or medical doctor and that she did not know how much Adderall Mr. Guertin actually took. Despite reporting this possibility, Dr. Rogstad opines Mr. Guertin is not competent.

As a result of his symptoms, Dr. Rogstad believes that Mr. Guertin is unable to participate in the legal process regarding his criminal matters. She credibly testified that while Mr. Guertin has good factual knowledge, he is unable to apply this knowledge due to delusional beliefs. For example, when Mr. Guertin spoke about his delusional beliefs, he indicated he would present evidence supporting these beliefs. In her report, Dr. Rogstad states, “...while he knows the nature of his charges, Mr. Guertin’s delusional beliefs are inextricably linked to his perceptions of his current legal situation, and they obstruct his ability to apply this factual legal knowledge to discussions of his own case in a rational manner devoid of delusional reasoning.” *Id.* at 9. Specifically, Dr. Rogstad reports that his delusions impacted his perception of relevant evidence, that he supported the choices he made “...with impaired perceptions of objective reality,” and that ultimately, he was unable to participate in “consistently coherent” and “reality-based” discussions regarding the proceedings. *Id.* Her testimony supports these conclusions when she states that Mr. Guertin did not understand evidence or the ramifications of making decisions because of the delusions that emerged as they were discussing legal proceedings. Dr. Rogstad also testified that Mr. Guertin lacks insight into his mental health, as evidenced by his belief that he is under duress as opposed to having any impaired perceptions. Finally, Dr. Rogstad testified that neither her report nor her opinion changed after observing Mr. Guertin’s testimony during the July 7, 2023 hearing.

¹ Mr. Guertin testified that he takes additional dosages of his Adderall medication on long days because the medication is “fast-acting.” He gave one example as working overnight at Coachella to finish an art piece for the next day.

The court finds that the greater weight of the evidence establishes that Mr. Guertin is not competent to proceed at this time. He suffers from a mental illness with a diagnosis of Unspecified Schizophrenia Spectrum and Other Psychotic Disorder, as offered by Dr. Rogstad. This may also include a mood component, namely mania or hypomania. This mental illness prevents Mr. Guertin from rationally understanding the legal process and obstructs his ability to prepare a defense or rationally consult with his counsel. Dr. Rogstad persuasively reports that Mr. Guertin's delusions impact his strategic decisions. For instance, he indicated that providing testimony at his trial would serve "...as a way to 'have the opportunity to make all this stuff [about his perceived persecution] public in the courtroom,'" with similar thoughts regarding evidence he collected. Ex. 3, p. 9. Additionally, the court observed Mr. Guertin testify, during which his answers often wandered towards the themes of technology, patents, and competitors. While it is evident that Mr. Guertin is an intelligent, talented individual with a passion for technology, this does not necessarily make him competent to proceed in his criminal matters. He may understand the factual components of criminal proceedings, but it is evident to the court that he is unable to apply this factual knowledge in his defense. Based upon the totality of evidence before the court including Mr. Guertin's testimony, Dr. Rogstad's testimony, and the exhibits received into evidence, the court concludes that the greater weight of the evidence establishes that Mr. Guertin is not currently competent to proceed and thus, the defense has not met their burden of proof.

In summary, the court finds the testimony and report of Dr. Rogstad to be the most credible and persuasive evidence regarding Mr. Guertin's competency to proceed. Dr. Rogstad has extensive experience conducting forensic evaluations, including having completed approximately 400 forensic evaluations. *See also* Ex. 2. Her report was thorough and considered several possible factors contributing to Mr. Guertin's symptoms, as well as the significance of those symptoms.

The court also notes the similarity in Mr. Guertin's presentation during both his evaluation and at the July 7, 2023 hearing: Mr. Guertin presented as verbose, with responses to questions that included excessive detail. He often brought his responses back to the themes of technology, patents, and competitors; and on occasion, had to ask that questions be repeated due to his extensive responses. Mr. Guertin appears to the court to be unable to separate matters involving his criminal charges from his delusional thoughts regarding his technology. It was evident that he continues to suffer from mental health concerns that impact his ability to fully understand and engage in the proceedings regarding his criminal matters.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

"A defendant has a due process right not to be tried or convicted of a criminal charge if he or she is legally incompetent." *Bonga v. State*, 797 N.W.2d 712, 718 (Minn. 2011). Rule 20.01 of the Minnesota Rules of Criminal Procedure requires that if the court finds by the greater weight of the evidence that the defendant is competent, it must enter an order finding the defendant competent to proceed. Minn. R. Crim. P. Rule 20.01, subd. 5(c). A defendant is incompetent and must not plead, be tried, or be sentenced if the defendant due to mental illness or cognitive impairment lacks ability to: (a) rationally consult with counsel; or (b) understand the proceedings or participate in the defense. *Id.*, subd. 2. The determination of whether a defendant is able to rationally consult with the defense attorney or understand and participate in the proceedings turns on the facts of each particular case. Moreover, fact-finders, including district courts, are not required to accept an expert's testimony or recommendations. *State v. Roberts*, 876 N.W.2d 863, 868 (Minn. 2016). Foremost, throughout the criminal proceedings the trial court must be mindful of its protective duty to ensure that a defendant is competent to proceed. See *State v.*

Bauer, 245 N.W.2d 848, 852 (Minn. 1976) (ruling that the court should have conducted further inquiry into the important matter of defendant's competency).

The greater weight of the evidence establishes that Mr. Guertin is incompetent to proceed.

ORDER

Defendant, Matthew David Guertin, is currently **INCOMPETENT** to proceed.

Order Recommended By:

BY THE COURT:

Referee of District Court

Judge of District Court

MINNESOTA
JUDICIAL
BRANCH