

# Charges filed in shooting death near bowling alley

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For almost four months, the shooting death of Winfred Kidd in a Jefferson City bowling alley parking lot had remained somewhat of a muddled mystery to prosecutors.

But after speaking with two new witnesses this week, Cole County Prosecutor Bill Tackett felt confident enough to charge the alleged shooter Saturday.

Jeffrey L. Abbott, 17, Jefferson City, now faces charges of voluntary manslaughter and armed criminal action. If convicted, he could face up to a life sentence.

As of late Saturday afternoon, police had not yet taken Abbott into custody.

"When there's a shooting in a car with multiple witnesses, it becomes like a complicated jigsaw puzzle," said Tackett. "But once you have all the pieces of the puzzle, it becomes much more clear."

Abbott, who was 16 at the time of the shooting, has been free since Oct. 7, a day after he was certified as an adult in court. Prior to that, he had been held in the Prenger Center since turning himself in to police the morning after the Aug. 28 shooting.

Kidd's mother and more than a dozen family members and friends marched in front of the courthouse before Abbott's adult certification hearing with signs that expressed outrage over a lack of charges.

But Tackett said his office wasn't prepared to file charges because, based on police reports and evidence, the suspect appeared to be acting in self-defense.

"We needed much more than we had to charge," said Tackett.

According to a police probable cause statement, the shooting occurred about 10:55 p.m. at the bowling alley at 2017 Christy Lane.

Abbott and several friends had a discussion with Kidd inside the bowling alley, according to eyewitnesses and a surveillance video.

Those witnesses said Kidd accused the suspect of carrying a gun and asked if it was "for him."

At 10:55 p.m., Abbott and his friends were seen walking out, according to the video. Within 15 seconds, Kidd is seen walking out the same door.

Kidd reportedly followed and jumped into

## ★ Shooting

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the car through one of the back doors and began punching the suspect repeatedly.

The suspect responded by pulling a gun and firing three shots behind his back toward Kidd.

A witness and the juvenile fled from the scene, leaving Kidd wounded in the parking lot. A short time later, Kidd died at Capital Region Medical Center from the wounds he received.

But based on accounts from a witness not previously interviewed by police, Tackett no longer believes the shooting was self-defense.

According to the witness, who Tackett said was standing five feet from the shooting, Kidd never entered the vehicle and was shot by Abbott during an argument.

"No one else had actually put the gun in Abbott's hands and that was a problem," said Tackett.

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