

## SanduskyRegister.com Front Article

### Not-guilty pleas in shotgun incident

By [MIKE FITZPATRICK](#)

Saturday, August 16, 2008 2:08 AM EDT

Register photo/[MIKE FITZPATRICK](#) William Barthel Jr. appeared in Erie County Common Pleas court Friday morning.

#### SANDUSKY

Hunched over in a red leather chair, his wrists locked in yellow handcuffs and his head bowed, William "Bill" Barthel Jr. hardly looked like a man who would try to kill someone.

But deputies said Barthel hunted down his estranged wife and her boyfriend with a loaded shotgun and threatened to kill them both.

Barthel was in Erie County Common Pleas Court on Friday for his arraignment in front of Judge Tygh Tone on charges of attempted murder with specification, felonious assault and attempted kidnapping. Barthel's attorney, Thomas J. DeBacco, entered not guilty pleas on all the charges.

Barthel, 55, Vermilion, appeared shaken prior to the hearing. He bowed his head, staring at his shower-shoe-clad feet and chain-wrapped ankles while DeBacco spoke with him. DeBacco waived the reading of the charges in open court, as well as the penalty if convicted.

After the short hearing, DeBacco declared his client is not guilty.

"He entered a not guilty plea to every charge he's accused of. We'll have a jury trial down the road, and we are going to argue to that jury that he did not cause physical harm to anyone, he didn't attempt to cause physical harm to anyone and certainly didn't attempt to murder anyone. He's entered a plea of not guilty. We stand by it and say, 'Prove it,'" DeBacco said.

When asked about the loaded shotgun, DeBacco responded:

"I'm not going to comment any further about the facts of the case because I haven't had an opportunity to cross-examine the person who accuses him of having a loaded shotgun," DeBacco said.

Barthel is next scheduled to appear in court at 10:30 a.m. Sept. 12.

According to Erie County Sheriff's deputies, Barthel was armed with a loaded 12-gauge Winchester shotgun at about 10 p.m. July 30 when he went looking for his estranged wife Shirley and her boyfriend, Jason Freeman, at a guesthouse in the 6300 block of Darrow Road.

A phone call from Shirley's son warned her Barthel was on his way "and he's going to try to kill you."

The couple ran, but Barthel confronted Shirley with the shotgun, put the gun to her temple and grabbed her by the hair, dragging her down the road, reports said. Shirley broke away from Barthel as deputies arrived.

Deputies chased Barthel into the woods and found him lying in a creek, but had to subdue him with a Taser when he tried to run, reports said.

Barthel also faces charges of criminal mischief, criminal trespass and felonious assault in Lorain County in connection with a May incident. That case has been bound over to the Lorain County grand jury, DeBacco said.

Barthel is in the Erie County Jail on \$200,000 bond.