
OLYMPICS

Judge denies release of former Olympian, Michael Barisone, charged with attempted murder

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Michael Barisone, the former U.S. Olympic dressage athlete charged with attempted murder, will be held in Morris County jail without bail after a Superior Court judge deemed him a danger to others and perhaps himself.

Barisone, 54, was charged with two counts of attempted murder and unlawful possession of a weapon after he allegedly shot his tenant Lauren Kanarek twice in the chest last week at his Hawthorne Hill farm in Long Valley.

Barisone entered the courtroom wide-eyed in his first court appearance Wednesday, in a yellow Morris County jail inmate jumpsuit and a black sling on his left arm.

The injury was caused by an alleged scuffle with Kanarek's fiancé, Robert Goodwin, who disarmed and pinned down Barisone as he attempted to shoot him after he fired two shots at Kanarek's chest, according to court documents. The spasm of violence was the result of a weeks-long landlord-tenant dispute, police say.

Judge Stephen Taylor denied Barisone release from jail based on his alleged decision to resort to violence and his repetition of the "fatalistic" phrase "I had a good life" after police responded to the crime scene.

"There are procedures in place by civil society in resolving those disputes and if Mr. Barisone had followed those procedures, we wouldn't be here today," Taylor said. "I think he does pose a danger, perhaps to himself as well."

Kanarek and Barisone called police to the two-story residence at Barisone's farm multiple times in the days leading up to the shooting. Barisone and his partner lived at the house with Kanarek and Goodwin, but relocated to a barn about a half-mile from the property in late

July after the relationship between the couples turned sour, said Christopher Schellhorn, assistant prosecutor at the Morris County Prosecutor's Office.

Kanarek and Goodwin had been training horses at the property for several months, said Jeffrey Simms, Barisone's attorney. They had a verbal agreement to stay at the residence until the training was completed but then refused to leave, he said.

Simms characterized the couple as "squatters" who did not pay rent and began to harass Barisone and his partner. He said Kanarek and Goodwin refused to listen to fire marshals who responded to the residence and told them to leave.

On the day of the shooting, child services, allegedly contacted by Kanarek and Goodwin visited Barisone and his partner to investigate "phony" allegations of abuse of the partner's two children, Simms said.

"This package of threats, harassment, standing outside his room at night screaming: 'We're going to do everything we can to destroy you, we're going to do everything we can to hurt your children,' may have culminated in a situation that was completely out of hand," Simms said. "Barisone was afraid, fearful for his life, fearful for his partner and fearful for the children."

Outside of court, the attorney called Kanarek, a dressage rider who remains in critical condition at Morristown Medical Center, not a victim but a villain.

"She is known as a grifter in the community," Simms said. "These people would do anything they could to hurt Mr. Barisone and that will come out."

Kanarek's fiancé, father and sister attended the court hearing Wednesday but declined to comment.

Days before the shooting, Kanarek wrote "I'm being bullied by a 6'3" man. Bullied to the point I'm afraid," on Facebook. In other social media posts, Kanarek said she was "dealing with severely deranged people" and that "a certain known drunk has literally just informed me 'sleep with one eye open.'"

She wrote that she planned to file a report with the U.S. Center for SafeSport, a nonprofit organization that investigates abuse in Olympic sports.