

Man charged after shooting incident

Des Moines police charged Kevin Gibler, 26, with attempted murder early Monday in the Sunday night shooting of Thomas Farris, 35, of 6901 S.E. 14th St.

Farris, who was shot in the left side of his head, remained in serious condition Monday at Iowa Methodist Medical Center.

Officers said they had been to the mobile home on 14th Street before to settle domestic disputes.

Gibler, who was being held at the Polk County Jail on \$45,500 bond, also was charged with possession with intent to deliver illegal drugs. His address was unavailable.

Criminal and victim reunited at Newton

By **JULI PROBASCO-SOWERS**
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Newton, Ia. — Inmate Kevin Gibler found more than a treatment program when he volunteered for InnerChange Freedom Initiative at the Newton Correctional Facility.

He found forgiveness from the man he shot in the head in 1995.

Gibler and Tom Farris, both of Des Moines, were acquaintances through their drug activity. They had a disagreement. Gibler became angry.

"At the moment I shot him," Gibler said, "my intention was to kill him."

He was sentenced to 35 years for attempted murder and sent to the maximum-security state prison in Anamosa. He took part in rehab programs. He learned screen printing in the prison sign shop. He learned how to read and write Braille. But he was looking for more.

Gibler heard about the InnerChange program and applied. He was accepted and transferred to the Newton prison in March 2000.

His victim also made a life-changing journey, which started with a long recovery from the shooting.

"If I hadn't gotten shot, I would have been going to prison," Farris said. "There was enough paper on the desk at the police station for drug charges at the time I got shot."

Farris found God at a tent revival three years ago. He became active in lay ministry soon after. He

became a volunteer chaplain at the Polk County Jail. And he volunteered to work in the InnerChange program in Newton.

He didn't know that Gibler had been transferred to the prison. Volunteers go through an exhaustive screening process, and Farris had to get further approval because of his criminal history. But the screening didn't reveal the men's connection. Had corrections officials known, they would have turned Farris away.

Farris visited the prison for volunteer orientation. "I was talking to some prisoners and happened to mention I had been shot," he said. "They asked who shot me. When I told them, one of them said Kevin was his roommate."

InnerChange counselors learned of the coincidence and asked the men individually if they wanted to meet. They did.

"I was very nervous," Farris said. "When I did see him, I broke down and cried. He told me the only thing he wanted was forgiveness. Yes, I do feel he has changed."

Gibler was nervous, too. "I saw him coming through the unit. He embraced me, and kept saying, 'I'm sorry,'" Gibler said. "He does forgive me."

Farris told Gibler he was sorry because he felt his lifestyle and attitude contributed to the shooting. "I felt I had a hand in what happened because of the kind of person I used to be," Farris said.

Both men believe God had a

Prohibited acts such as substance abuse and dealing drugs:

████████████████████ 64

Sex offenses, including rape and lascivious acts:

████████████████████ 40

Theft, burglary and robbery:

████████████████████ 28

Habitual property theft:

████████ 9

Vehicular homicide:

████████ 8

First-degree murder, second-degree murder:

████████ 7 each

Attempted murder:

████████ 5

Forgery, felon in possession or transportation of a firearm, and willful injury:

████████ 4 each

Voluntary manslaughter, second-degree kidnapping, third offense OWI and third-degree kidnapping:

████████ 2 each

Driving while barred, terrorism, assault while participating in a felony, money laundering, first-degree kidnapping and child endangerment (serious):

████████ 1 each

*NOTE: Some of the 192 inmates have more than one offense.

SOURCE: Iowa Department of Corrections and InnerChange Freedom Initiative

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strong hand in bringing them together.

"Being in the program at the time, seeing God changing people around me," Gibler said, "it is hard not to give credit to God for that."