

## **UPDATE: Todd Man Charged with Murder**

Written by Steve Frank  
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A picture is developing in the fatal shooting of a man Thursday night in an incident in Todd. Neighbors said that the victim, 30-year-old Richard Matthew Bartlett, rented a room at the 996 South Road home of Thomas James Laing, who is now charged with second degree murder in Bartlett's death. The incident was reported at about 8 Thursday night at the address off Meat Camp Road and at the end of South Road in Todd, reports saying a white male was found shot in the head, but was still alive. Deputies secured the scene for medics and first responders, and the victim was rushed from the scene to a landing zone at Elk Knob State Park where they met a WINGS Air Rescue chopper. The chopper made its way to the Johnson City Medical Center with the victim, but Richard Matthew Bartlett was pronounced dead shortly after arrival at the Tennessee hospital. Watauga County Sheriff's Office Investigators at the scene made the arrest of Laing for Second Degree Murder, the 57-year old taken before a Watauga County Magistrate and set a \$300,000 secured bond with a court date of May 17th. Neighbors said Bartlett rented a room at the home, and there were signs of the shooting evident on the front of the home—a bullet hole through the front door, broken glass, and a trail of blood on the front porch. Investigators, though, have not released details of what lead up to the shooting.