

Man accused of killing baby deer in Cheektowaga

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POSTED: 4:28 PM, Aug 3, 2015

UPDATED: 9:13 AM, Aug 4, 2015

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CHEEKTOWAGA, N.Y. (WKBW) - Some Cheektowaga residents are on edge because their neighbor, 23-year-old Vincent Tartick, is accused of shooting and killing a baby deer in the middle of a residential neighborhood.

Residents tell 7 Eyewitness News this has been going on for months and worry what their neighbor may target next.

Neighbors say they heard three gunshots before they found a dead deer on Brookedge Road, about 5 p.m. Sunday night. Tartick opened fire, according to police, and killed a deer in his backyard.

"It's really sad that someone would kill such an innocent animal," Melissa Cortese, who lives across the street.

"It's an obvious dangerous situation there's houses all around there. I don't know what he was thinking," Cheektowaga Assistant Chief Jim Speyer said.

But after the shooting, Speyer says Tartick took off running. "He ran and tried to hide from us. There's no doubt about that," Speyer said.

Tartick was found about an hour later. A fully-loaded .22 caliber rifle was found inside his home.

"It was just a little fawn... just a little fawn that was shot in the head, needlessly, ruthlessly, it's sad," Speyer said.

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Police say they also found several dead birds right by the tree where the deer was killed. Neighbors there say Tartick has been shooting out his back window for months.

"If he's going after animals, he might go after my dog. Kids are all in the neighborhood playing in the backyard," Maryann Cortese said.

Cortese and her daughter Melissa live across the street. They say the deer would often travel as a trio; the mom and her two babies.

"We saw the mom and the little fawn last night, looking around for the other fawn... we felt really bad," Cortese said.

Tartick was arrested and charged with reckless endangerment. He was released on \$1,000 bail.

No one at Tartick's home wanted to talk.

Neighbors say the gun was taken from Tartick. The DEC has also filed several charges against the 23-year-old, who is due back in court on Friday.

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