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Mental exam ordered after threats on actor

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A federal magistrate judge ordered a mental evaluation yesterday for Brian Keith Neun, an Ellicott City man charged with making threats on the lives of actor Clint Eastwood and his family.

U.S. Magistrate Judge Catherine C. Blake granted a motion by Assistant U.S. Attorney Beth P. Gesner to determine whether Mr. Neun, 30, of the 3100 block of Normandy Drive, is competent to stand trial. She postponed his detention hearing, which had been scheduled yesterday, until the evaluation is conducted.

Mr. Neun remained in the custody of U.S. marshals.

Larry Nathans, his federal public defender, agreed to the mental evaluation. "It's a sad case," Mr. Nathans said, declining to elaborate.

According to a court affidavit, someone identifying himself as "Brian" made several calls to Warner Brothers Studios intended for Mr. Eastwood between March 19 and March 26. On one message, he left his area code and telephone number. The messages contained a number of demands for money.

A message recorded on March 26 stated: "Hot off the presses, and this is for you, Clint. I have rights to that money. Rights. Got that? So there's not a damn thing you can do about it to keep me from collecting, and that includes up to, and including your death."

In one of the messages, the caller threatened to kill Mr. Eastwood on April 11 unless the actor gave him \$5 million.

Mr. Eastwood has told authorities that he did not know Mr. Neun and was concerned about the safety of his children.

Court documents said Mr. Neun told FBI agents that he had been a Clint Eastwood fan since age 8, and said he made the telephone calls in anger and prompted by God.