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Stiffer charges in Valleyfair beating

By **JIM ADAMS**, Star Tribune

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An Apple Valley man who was hit from behind and attacked by several men while on a July 4th outing to Valleyfair stood up, wiped the blood out of his eyes and saw a young man attacking his 15-year-old daughter.

The father, 41, grabbed the man, Terry L. Arnold, 22, put him in a head lock and punched him in the face. Then seven of Arnold's buddies jumped in, knocking the father down and kicking and jumping on him, according to a more serious assault charge filed Thursday against one of the suspects in Scott County District Court.

Blood streamed from the father's eyebrows as he lay by the "Guess Your Weight" game booth. His wife and a daughter tried to shield him from the blows, but he was knocked unconscious.

The new details emerged as charges were upgraded from third- to first-degree assault Thursday against Devondre Q. Evans-Lewis, 18, of Columbia Heights, the first of the group to make a first court appearance.

Charges were amended after prosecutors learned the victim may have long-term injuries. Besides his previously reported broken eye socket, he suffered serious eye and nerve damage to his optic nerve and to facial nerves that may not heal. He had eyebrow cuts requiring stitches, bleeding in his right eye and other injuries.

County Attorney Pat Ciliberto declined to comment on whether more serious charges would be filed against the other suspects, who are free on bail.

After mug shots of the black suspects were made public, the case generated intense public reaction in online blogs and news sites and was debated on local talk radio shows after many callers mistakenly believed the victims were white. The Scott County attorney's office received numerous calls urging that a hate-crime charge be filed until Ciliberto announced last week that the victims and suspects are all black.

The new charges also detail the escalating confrontation with Arnold and another man that turned into a fight as the victim's extended family was leaving Valleyfair on July 4th. The family went to the park in Shakopee to celebrate the victim's daughter's upcoming 16th birthday.

Detectives have reinterviewed the couple and their two daughters. The amended charges give this account:

As the family was leaving the old-fashioned portrait studio about 11:40 that night, the victim's two daughters and a female cousin walked about 20 yards ahead of the family. One of the suspects, later identified as Andrew D. Shannon, 19, tapped the cousin on her head with an inflatable bat. The victim's 15-year-old daughter told Shannon to keep his hands off her cousin. The father caught up and told Shannon that he had no business touching the girl. Shannon and Arnold became irate and started swearing at family members.

Arnold got in the 15-year-old daughter's face and her dad got between them. Arnold puffed out his chest and the father pushed his face away and told him to back off. The father gathered his family and headed for the exit gate. Shannon got on his cell phone and was overheard saying he needed back-up.

A group of eight ran toward the family and hit the father from behind, knocking him down. Several attacked him. He got up, saw Arnold attacking his 15-year-old daughter and punched Arnold in the face. Then the group turned on the father, kicking and jumping on him as his wife and a daughter tried to protect him.

Police arrived and arrested seven suspects; the eighth escaped and has not been found. The wife identified the seven at Valleyfair and told police afterward she was very frightened when she heard one suspect say on his cell phone, "Find out what vehicles they're driving."

The victim and his family fear retaliation and have not been named. Calls to their home Thursday were not returned.

One of the suspects, Derry D. Evans, 19, is scheduled to have a first appearance next week. Evans and five other suspects, who all posted bail bonds, still face third-degree assault charges. Six young men and an unnamed 14-year-old boy are charged in the case.

Judge Michael Fahey increased bail Thursday for Evans-Lewis from \$40,000 to \$75,000. Fahey ordered him to have no contact with the victim's family. If he does post bail, he must wear a GPS locator so authorities know his whereabouts and must stay at least 2 miles away from Apple Valley, where the victim lives. Ciliberto said his office sought bail of \$200,000.

Besides Shannon, of Minneapolis; Arnold, of Brooklyn Park, and Derry Evans, of Minneapolis, the other men charged with third-degree assault are Darris D. Evans, 20, of Brooklyn Park, and Anthony C. Gildersleeve, 20, Edina.

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