

UIS students face hate crime charges

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Three University of Illinois Springfield students were arrested early Saturday in connection with an incident that authorities are calling a hate crime.

The three men allegedly were at an off-campus party when they began calling two other men derogatory names aimed at homosexuals.

When the two groups apparently ended up in the same parking lot at apartments on Larkspur Court after leaving the party, one man was beaten and a car belonging to a second man was damaged, according to UIS police. The incident occurred about 3:40 a.m. Saturday.

Arrested were Jonathan Bishop, 27, of Belleville; Michial Filipiak, 22, of Chicago; and Charles A. Sales, 23, of Farmersville. The Sangamon County Jail lists Bishop and Sales as having the same on-campus apartment address.

The Sangamon County state's attorney's office Monday charged all three with a hate crime, criminal damage to property of more than \$300 and battery. A charge of resisting a peace officer also was filed against Bishop, who fought being handcuffed, according to UIS police.

The hate crime and criminal damage to property charges are felonies; battery and resisting arrest are misdemeanors.

UIS police reports said Bishop, Filipiak and the man who was beaten all appeared to be intoxicated. The 20-year-old man whose car was damaged is a UIS student, according to police reports, while the man who was beaten is not.

UIS police were dispatched to the parking lot of Larkspur Court at 3:41 a.m. Saturday and found several men standing around a 2007 Chevrolet coupe with the side mirrors and door handles broken off.

The 20-year-old driver of the vehicle said he and his 22-year-old friend had been at an off-campus party where Bishop, Filipiak and Sales called them derogatory names. The driver said neither he nor his friend knew the three.

He said he and his friend left the party and that he was trying to visit a friend on Larkspur Court and ended up behind Sales' vehicle in the parking lot.

The driver said the 22-year-old got out of the car and was attacked by the three men. The driver said he started honking his horn, and the three men tried to get to him by kicking and punching his car and pulling the door handles and mirrors off.

The man who was beaten said he got out of the car with his hands out and palms up, and the three knocked him to the ground and punched and kicked him while he was on the ground.

Sales reportedly told UIS police he was trying to break up the fight and that Bishop was the only one hitting the 22-year-old and damaging the other man's car. The report said Sales admitted calling the two men names at the party and in the parking lot. He told police he had broken the passenger door handle trying to get the man being beaten back inside the car.

Filipiak told police the two men followed the three suspects from the party and that he, too, was trying to break up the fight.

Bishop said the two men had followed him, Filipiak and Sales from the party and that Rogers got out and attacked him.

A witness said he heard a man on the passenger side of the car call the man inside a derogatory name and yell for him to get out of the car. A second man grabbed the 22-year-old and pushed him against the car, while a third man went to the driver's side and began hitting the car, the witness said.

Another witness said he went outside after he heard a horn honk twice and saw Sales kicking the passenger side of the car. He said Bishop was on the driver's side hitting the window, then beating on the hood.

The witness said he saw Filipiak holding one man by the throat while shoving him against the car. He told police he knows all three suspects by name.

University of Illinois Springfield Chancellor Ricard Ringeisen said the incident is under investigation by the UIS Police Department.

All three suspects were taken to the Sangamon County Jail, where they were released after posting bond. They are scheduled to appear in Sangamon County Circuit Court on Nov. 4.

Chris Detro can be reached at 788-1510.

UIS response

University of Illinois Springfield Chancellor Richard Ringeisen sent an email to the campus community Saturday afternoon saying that a hate crime had been reported to UIS police early Saturday.

"Without qualifications, we condemn such behavior," Ringeisen said. "Our desire is to have a UIS community that is inclusive of all people and where tolerance is universal."

More than 100 people joined a Rally Against Hate and Violence on the quad of the University of Illinois Springfield Monday.

Bret Tate, president of the school's Queer-Straight Alliance, said the rally, the first of its kind in recent years, was prompted by an alleged hate crime on campus early Saturday. Three UIS students have been charged in the case, in which anti-homosexual taunts allegedly led to a man being beaten.

"Our goal is to empower people," he said. "Acts like this won't be tolerated."

Tate said he got a call about the incident Saturday morning, and quickly set up a meeting with the school's administration.

The rally began at 9:30 p.m. with statements from Tate, professors and a representative from the chancellor's office. That was followed by a candlelight march and a "speakout" on the quad.

Kaleigh Brutlag, 22, of Springfield, said she had heard about the Saturday morning incident.

"A couple of my friends told me about it," she said. "Hopefully, we'll take a couple steps forward in heightening security."

Others like Jessica Watkins, 22, of Springfield, said the attack was unacceptable to her because she is bisexual. Watkins said she heard about the attack while participating in a game night with fellow gay friends on Saturday.

"I was extremely (angry)," she said. "The more people we have, the louder voice we will have. Hopefully something will happen."

Ed Wojcicki, the UIS associate chancellor for constituent relations, said intolerant behavior is not tolerated at the school.

"Sometimes people have thoughts and behave in ways that we wish they would not behave," he said. "We're not gathered here tonight as a collective of victims, but as a support system."

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