



Attack duo being held on no bond

Two men arrested for an attack on a man and woman remain in custody July 27, on aggravated battery and tampering with evidence charges.

The victims claim the duo attacked them wearing “brass knuckles.”

Marlin James and Darrick Desiderio, a registered sex offender, are being held at the McKinley County Adult Detention Center on “no bond,” for an alleged brutal attack in broad daylight, near the railroad tracks adjacent to the business Supersmith’s, Inc., 716 W. Maloney Ave.

The incident, which occurred July 24, was caught on surveillance camera, according to Gallup Police Department Det. Neil Yazzie’s arrest warrant report. Police were called to the scene shortly after 2 pm.

The victim, Andre Pinto, was interviewed at a local hospital where he was being treated for injuries. The brutal attack left about 30 yards of “low velocity” blood splatter at the scene.

Pinto told detectives that he and Claudia Johnson were walking in the area of Supersmith's, seemingly minding their own business, when a man wearing a "green marijuana cap," later identified as James, and another man, "skinny with a bald head," later identified as Desiderio, approached them.

It immediately turned into a terse confrontation, with the victim saying he feared that he was about to be robbed. Pinto said Desiderio, 39, circled behind him, then attacked him, beating him to the ground. He suffered blunt force trauma to his nose and face. He told detectives that he believes his girlfriend, Johnson, was attacked with brass knuckles, but wasn't sure.

However, when Johnson was interviewed by GPD Lt. Rosanne Morrissette, she said the men used brass knuckles to beat on Pinto, and James, 20, struck her in the mouth with the weapon before throwing her to the ground.

Desiderio didn't walk away from the attack unscathed. He was taken to a local hospital for treatment to wounds on his arms, hands and face.

GPD Det. John Yearly noted that Desiderio was in an "irate state of mind" when he spoke to him. Desiderio claimed Pinto attacked him with a knife and that he "told him to put it down, and fight like a man," the report states. He told another detective that Pinto knows he's sex offender and initiated the confrontation.

A "Milwaukee knife" was found at the scene, which Morrissette said belonged to Pinto who was attempting to defend himself against the two men surrounding him.

Morrissette said detectives were unable to find brass knuckles on the duo or in the immediate area, but Pinto's injuries seem consistent with being hit by an object other than a closed fist.

Both Desiderio and James are scheduled for a motion hearing in Magistrate Judge Cynthia Sanders courtroom July 31.

By Babette Herrmann
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