

NEWS RELEASE



Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office
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TWO LONG BRANCH MEN CHARGED WITH AGGRAVATED ASSAULT IN NEPTUNE TOWNSHIP

On February 22, 2010, Patrick Joyce, 26, of Long Branch, N.J., was arrested by Detectives from the Neptune Township Police Department and the Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office and charged with one count of second degree Aggravated Assault. The charge relates to an assault which took place on January 31, 2010, outside a Neptune Township, N.J., nightclub.

A second man, Richard Covert, 25, also of Long Branch, N.J., has also been charged with second degree Aggravated Assault in connection with the assault. Covert has not yet been apprehended and law enforcement authorities believe that he is currently out of State.

The charges which have been filed result from a joint investigation which was conducted by the Neptune Township Police Department and the Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office with the assistance of the Long Branch Police Department following an incident which occurred at approximately 2:00 a.m. on January 31, 2010, outside of the Headliner. The Headliner is a nightclub located on Route 35 southbound in Neptune Township, N.J.

The investigation revealed that as a 33 year old Neptune Township man and his wife were exiting the Headliner, Joyce followed them outside. When the man asked Joyce why Joyce was following them, Joyce pointed to the man's wife and indicated that he was trying to talk to her. The man advised Joyce that she was his wife and that he did not want Joyce to speak with her. Words were then exchanged, following which Joyce punched the man in the face

A second man, later identified as Covert, and a third man who has not yet been positively identified exited a nearby Jeep and approached Joyce and the man and his wife. All three men assaulted the man. As a result of the assault, the man fell to the ground. Even after the man fell to the ground, the three men continued to assault him by kicking him. As the three men were kicking the man, the man's wife and her sister attempted to cover the man with their bodies in an attempt to protect him.

The man who was assaulted went to Jersey Shore University Medical Center later in the day on January 31, 2010. At the hospital the man was diagnosed with a fractured jaw. The fractured jaw required immediate medical attention, which included surgery to insert a titanium plate into the lower jaw.

If convicted of the second degree Aggravated Assault, the maximum potential custodial sentence is a State Prison term of up to ten years. Second degree Aggravated Assault is subject to the “No Early Release Act,” which means that if convicted of that crime the men would be required to serve 85% of any custodial sentence imposed before becoming eligible for release on parole.

Following Joyce’s arrest, Neptune Township Municipal Court Judge Robin Wernik set bail for Joyce at \$25,000 with the 10% option. Joyce posted bail on February 22, 2010 and was released. Covert’s bail will not be set until he has been apprehended.

Joyce has been employed as a Patrolman by the Long Branch Police Department for five years. Joyce was off duty at the time of the assault. Upon the filing of the criminal charge against him, Joyce was suspended by the Long Branch Police Department without pay.

Despite these charges, every defendant is presumed innocent, unless and until found guilty beyond a reasonable doubt, following a trial at which the defendant has all of the trial rights guaranteed by the United States Constitution and State law.

Notwithstanding the filing of the charges, the investigation into the assault is continuing. Individuals possessing information regarding the assault are encouraged to contact Detective Susan Michling of the Monmouth County Prosecutor’s Office at 1-800/533-7443 and/or Detective Eugene Stewart of the Neptune Township Police Department at 732/ 988-8000.

The case is assigned to Assistant Monmouth County Prosecutor Gregory J. Schweers. Joyce is represented by Robert Holden, Esquire, of Shrewsbury, N.J.

Date: February 23, 2010