Local Suspect Arrested in Connection With Hate Crime

Arlington Resident Charged With Assault of Two Tufts Students

by BROCK McCORMACK
Observer Editorial Board

Arlington resident Dean Rafferty, 22, has been charged with several counts of assault and battery with a dangerous weapon in connection with the hate crime assault of two Tufts students that occurred on Saturday, Feb. 28.

Detective Chuck Lonero of the Tufts University Police Department confirmed that the suspect was served with an arrest warrant this weekend, but was released on cash bail Monday under the pretense that he does not present a danger to the community.

Rafferty is being prosecuted under the newly passed Hate Crimes Prevention Act, which was enacted following the murder of gay Wyoming student Matthew Shepard and the racist dragging death of African-American James Byrd Jr. in Texas. Rafferty could be sentenced to a maximum 5 years in prison and fined $10,000.

Lonero reported that the suspect's house was first surrounded by police before Lonero approached the door to arrest the suspect. Rafferty was not home at the time, but he later turned himself into police. Lonero said that Rafferty's people, neither do I. He just isn't like that; he doesn't label people." She also said that her son had no prior history of assault. The suspect was unavailable for comment.

Police interrogated the suspect, loading dock and attended the Tufts party as the guest of an invitee's brother.

Carl Sciotino, co-coordinator of the Tufts Transgendered, Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Collective, said, "I'm happy that TUPD worked so hard to get this case resolved. Now that the arrest has been made, we can't forget that the issue is still here. TEAM-Q (Tufts Educating and Mentoring Queers) will be sending out letters to student groups, campus leaders, fraternity and sorority clubs, and faculty about continuing the discussion about hate crimes and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender issues in general."

Sciotino added that the suspect's assault was a "targeted attack on a gay student." The assault occurred during a "fagget" party at the Tufts University TUPD is "looking into programming" about the attack, as it can "definitely be a risk anywhere; people need to work against it and try to prevent it."

The two Tufts students involved in the assault were approached after leaving an off-campus party on Feb. 28, with one being repeatedly kicked and hit while his friend attempted to intervene. The suspect was heard to yell "fagget" repeatedly.

Senior Victoria Canovar said, "(Rafferty) should be punished as much as possible. I think it was disgusting what happened. I was impressed by the number of people who went to the rally, but more needs to be done."

The General Law of Massachusetts regarding hate crimes states, "Whoever commits an assault or a battery upon a person or damages the real or personal property of a person with the intent to intimidate such person because of such person's race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or disability shall be punished by a fine...or by imprisonment...or by both such fine and imprisonment." This part of the law has now been amended under the federal Hate Crimes Prevention Act to allow for more severe punishment.

President Clinton said in a statement about the recent Alabama murder of homosexual Billy Jack Gaither, "Laws represent values that we as a society cherish, and among those values is a belief that intolerance is un-American. And into tolerance, left unchallenged, can inspire evil deeds that threaten the very fabric of this great country. All Americans deserve protection from hate. Nothing is more important to our country's future than our standing together against intolerance, prejudice and violent bigotry...all Americans can be made more safe and secure."

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