

Officer talks about being assaulted

Written by DENISE A. RAYMO, Staff Writer
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MALONE — An angry, drunken mob of teenagers repeatedly kicked him in the face and ribs, but Tupper Lake Village Police Officer Jason Amell never let go of Brad Eggsware. And when an accomplice pulled Eggsware free and helped him run away, the bloodied, injured officer still ran after the suspect to take him into custody.

"I knew what I had to do," Amell said Thursday. "It's my job."

He was standing outside the Franklin County Courtroom just moments after seeing the 19-year-old Tupper Lake man who attacked him on St. Patrick's Day 2006 sentenced to seven years in state prison.

This was the first time Amell has been able to speak to the media about what happened because the case was pending in court.

Amell was patrolling on Main Street about 11 that night when he saw Eggsware.

Knowing he had an outstanding warrant against him for an alleged burglary, the officer attempted to make an arrest.

Several people were hanging around, and the officer could smell alcohol as he approached the suspect.

Eggsware took off running, with Amell in close pursuit. The teen tried to jump over a snow bank but tripped and fell down.

Amell said he grabbed hold of Eggsware, and the two tussled on the ground until Amell ended up on his back with Eggsware lying face-up on top of him, with the officer's arms wrapped around.

"He was hitting me, mostly with his elbows," Amell said, imitating the quick, jabbing motions Eggsware used to pummel his ribs.

"And still Jason didn't let go," said Tupper Lake Police Chief T.J. Fee, who accompanied the officer to court.

In the meantime, a crowd of young people from an underage drinking party began gathering around the pair, yelling at Amell to let Eggsware go.

Between eight and 10 of them began kicking the officer's face and sides, but he was able to keep his grip on Eggsware until someone began to pull the teen out.

As he wiggled around to help free himself, Eggsware lifted Amell's head and shoulders off the ground and repeatedly slammed him to the pavement.

"He did that between three and eight times," Amell said.

At one point, the officer was lifted about shoulder height by the kneeling teenager and slammed hard to the ground.

Eggsware ran away again, and again he fell down in the snow. That gave the injured officer a chance to catch up.

"He fell into a pile of debris, and I attempted to arrest him again," Amell said. "I was telling him: 'You're under arrest. Quit resisting.' But he was able to get on top of me and was kneeling over me and started throwing punches.

"I think I blacked out for a second because the next thing I remember was someone touching my belt. I made sure my weapon was secure. I had one hand holding him and the other making sure my weapon was secure."

The light from an approaching officer's flashlight got Eggsware off Amell, and he ran off a third time.

Eggsware eventually fled to Plattsburgh, where he was arrested two days later.

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As other officers came to help, "Jason said, 'Forget about me. Get Eggsware,'" Chief Fee said. "We could never really talk about this until today, but he did everything he was supposed to do. "Some people who first saw him said he was a mess, a disaster," the chief said of the officer's obvious injuries. "But he walked to the ambulance."

Amell's most serious injury was a broken nose, which had to be repaired surgically.

And he was the subject of scorn and ridicule in the Tupper Lake area shortly after the incident because some of the people who were there that night complained he used excessive force.

But as more facts of the case came to light and the investigation continued, Amell said, attitudes toward him softened.

He now carries an extra set of handcuffs and a smaller flashlight on his belt, but little else has changed since the incident.

"This was expected," he said, referring to the inherent dangers of being a police officer.

"I knew something like this could happen."