Transient severely beaten after false accusation of rape

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TONY SIMMONS / Online Editor

PANAMA CITY BEACH – A man was beaten bloody and senseless by an unknown group of people after someone falsely accused him of raping an intoxicated woman outside a bar early Sunday morning.

About 12:44 a.m. Sunday, the Bay County Sheriff’s Office was called to Newby’s Too, 4103 Thomas Drive, in reference to a sexual battery, according to an incident report. However, the woman who was identified as the victim said she had not been raped, and a man the crowd had detained as the perpetrator was in serious condition from a severe beating.

A deputy said the 41-year-old transient had been beaten so badly that his eyes were swollen shut and he couldn’t see. He was in and out of consciousness and could not tell authorities his name. Several people were holding rags on the man’s head to soak up blood.

While EMS treated the man, deputies spoke to the supposed victim and others present. The woman said she did not have sex with anyone; she had gone to the parking lot to lie down in a van that belonged to her boyfriend’s buddy. She was hot, so she took off her pants, she said. She saw several people taking the injured man from the van, but she didn’t know what happened.

The woman’s boyfriend said he had sent her to his friend’s van because she was intoxicated, according to the report. He wanted her to sleep it off. Later, he sent his buddy to check on her, and that’s when he found out the other man had been beaten up for supposedly raping the woman.

The man who owns the van told a deputy he had gone outside to check on the woman and saw a man on top of her. He believed the man was in the process of raping her. The report said the man “notified several people, unknown to him” of the attack, and the man was caught and “taken away.” He said he was not aware someone had beaten the alleged attacker until later.
A witness told deputies that he was in the parking lot and saw the supposed perpetrator running through the lot. He heard someone say the man had just raped a girl, so he tackled the man. Several others came over and took the man aside, and he did not see what happened next, he said.

The injured man was taken to Gulf Coast Medical Center for treatment. He had several head injuries, the report said. His eyes were swollen shut, his nose was swollen and bleeding, and he appeared to have blood coming from his eyes. He was coughing up blood.

When he regained consciousness, he told a deputy that he didn’t know how he got in the van or how he got to Newby’s; he denied having sex with anyone. He said he thought he was climbing in the van to get a ride to the beach; the deputy pointed out that he was already at the beach.

The man said he drank a fifth of whisky and two cases of beer that night.

He didn’t know any of the people who had beaten him and couldn’t identify them.

The case is still under investigation.