

## **TURKEY-TOSSING INCIDENT, ALLEGED RINGLEADER POSTS \$250K BAIL**

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The last of six teenagers charged in a turkey-tossing incident that left a motorist critically injured was arraigned yesterday, as the alleged "ringleader" of the group posted bail and walked free.

Michael Hasbrouck, 18, of Selden, was arraigned on a charge of possession of stolen property in First District Court in Central Islip, an accusation stemming from his alleged role in the shopping spree that the teenagers launched after one of them stole a woman's credit card from a parked car on Nov. 12 at about 10 p.m. in Holtsville.

After that, the teens allegedly bought hundreds of dollars worth of items from two Blockbuster outlets in the Lake Grove area. They also purchased food and cooking equipment, including the 20-pound turkey, from a Waldbaum's in Ronkonkoma, police said.

Police have said that about 12:30 a.m. Nov. 13, one teenager, Ryan Cushing, 18, of Huntington, threw the bird out of the rear window of the car and that it smashed through the windshield of an oncoming car, giving a 44-year-old woman serious facial injuries.

A spokesman for Stony Brook University Hospital said the victim, whom police have not identified and whose name Newsday is withholding, was in critical but stable condition yesterday. Her facial bones had been shattered by the projectile.

But Hasbrouck's attorney, Edward Pshedesky of Hauppauge, said his client didn't know about his friends' plan to toss the turkey from the car. Hasbrouck appeared in a gray T-shirt as he was granted \$5,000 cash bail.

"He feels very bad about the person who was hurt," Pshedesky said, speaking of Hasbrouck. "But court papers do not indicate direct knowledge on his part" of the idea to throw the turkey.

Hasbrouck allegedly wasn't in the car from which the bird was thrown, but was driving another vehicle. The teenagers had been traveling in three vehicles.

But two other teenagers, Rachel MacDonald, 17, of Centereach, and Jack Cutrone, 18, of Selden, were in the car with Cushing, the Farmingdale State University freshman whom prosecutors are calling the “ringleader” in the string of allegedly fraudulent purchases that culminated in the near-fatal incident.

Cushing, who is charged with first-degree assault, reckless endangerment, forgery, criminal mischief and criminal possession of stolen property, posted his \$250,000 bail and was released from the Suffolk County jail yesterday.

Also charged in the incident are Cutrone, who faces a charge of criminal possession of stolen property; Steven Manzolina, 17, of Selden, who is charged with grand larceny and criminal possession of stolen property; and Amanda McDonald, 17, of Selden, who is charged with criminal possession of stolen property. Rachel MacDonald is charged with criminal possession of stolen property.

The attorney for MacDonald distanced his client from Cushing, saying he was the sole actor in the crime.

“I can only say that my two clients are extremely remorseful and upset about what happened to this innocent victim, especially since they had nothing to do with the horrendous actions of Mr. Cushing,” said Michael Brown of Central Islip, who represents McDonald and MacDonald.

The victim’s relatives could not be reached for comment yesterday, but her friends expressed sadness over the tragedy.

Mary Anne Nesfield, of Bellmore, has worked for the victim at a Garden City-based collection agency since 1997. Since the incident, she said, a silence has shrouded the office.

“She’s a very talkative individual,” Nesfield said, “... our office just doesn’t seem the same without her presence.”

Nesfield said co-workers worry about the woman, who spent eight hours in surgery two days ago to have the fragile bones of her face reconstructed. Nesfield said yesterday she asked her church to pray for the woman’s recovery.

Nesfield described her boss as a “defenseless woman who didn’t even have a chance to say, ‘Why me?’ when suddenly a frozen 20- pound turkey knocked her out cold from some ruthless individual who got his jollies throwing food around, which in reality is a sin.”

Staff writers Theresa Vargas and Denise M. Bonilla contributed to this story.