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Suspect disarms officer in tussle

By Antwon R. Martin
The Register-Mail
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GALESBURG — A Galesburg man was arrested Sunday morning after disarming an officer of his Taser and throwing it.

The Taser has not yet been recovered, Galesburg Police Lt. James Bradford said Monday.

According to police reports, Derrick L. Diggins, 23, West South Street, was arrested around 1:30 a.m. Sunday during an altercation between officers and another Galesburg man, later identified as Isiah Cunningham, 24, Meadow Drive.

Officers walking through Crazy 8's, 240 W. Main St., spotted a "brief disturbance" on the dance floor, but were unable to make their way through the crowd of 120 to 150 patrons. After talking with bar employees, who indicated they wanted the bar closed for the night due to the disturbance and size of the crowd, police began telling patrons to leave.

Outside, Cunningham was yelling and attempting to re-enter the bar having earlier been removed by a bouncer. Placing a hand on Cunningham's chest, an officer told him to stay out of the bar. Shakee Cunningham, 25, Meadow Drive, grabbed the officer's arm and told the officer not to touch her brother.

Shakee further yelled into the officer's face not to touch her. Isiah, who continued to resist, was escorted across the street to Casey's General Store where the arresting officer's vehicle was parked.

A crowd of as many as 130 people had gathered around officers, surrounding Isiah and the squad of police.

While police attempted to secure Isiah in a police cruiser, Diggins approached the officers and demanded to know why Isiah was being arrested. Police told Diggins to leave the area, but Diggins persisted.

During the altercation, officers attempted to verbally disperse the crowd.

Police reports stated Diggins was "trying to incite the crowd against officers," hindering the squad's ability to keep the crowd back.

After Diggins ignored another warning to leave the area, police told Diggins he was under arrest for obstructing a police officer.

Unable to place him in handcuffs, an officer took Diggins to the ground where he continued to resist. Diggins regained his footing and tried to free his hands until another officer struck Diggins in the midsection with a fist.

Diggins fell to one knee, but continued to resist. One officer brandished a Taser and deployed the bolts at Diggins's chest, though only one bolt made contact and the altercation continued. At some point during the altercation, Diggins pulled the Taser away and threw it.

At this point, the crowd moved in, cheering Diggins on. Unable to disperse the crowd with verbal commands, an officer used pepper spray on the group.


A second officer deployed a Taser round into Diggins's back, after which police were able to cuff Diggins and secure him in a squad car.

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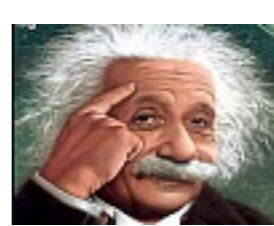
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