



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on October 12, 2017

Felony Charges Filed Against Counter-protester in Charlottesville

Antifa showed up at the August 11-12 “Unite the Right” rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, brandishing baseball bats and pepper spray, determined to disrupt the rally scheduled to protest the removal of a statue of Confederate General Robert E. Lee. Predictably, violence occurred, resulting in several injuries, and even one death — a young woman named Heather Heyer — when a man drove his car into a crowd of people protesting the presence of the Unite the Right group.



After the incident, President Donald Trump caused a national stir when he stated the obvious: What had happened was an “egregious display of hatred, bigotry and violence on many sides.”

Now, a young black man, DeAndre Harris, who was beaten with a metal pipe and wooden boards by at least six white men inside a parking garage, has now been charged himself with the malicious wounding of Harold Ray Crews, chairman of the North Carolina chapter of the League of the South. From the beginning, two of the men charged with beating Harris — Alex Michael Ramos of Georgia and Daniel Borden of Ohio — argued that it was Harris who instigated the physical confrontation.

The League of the South’s public relations officer, Brad Griffin, said that his group obtained an arrest warrant after getting “sick of waiting” for the police to act on the evidence that they had provided them.

Response from the Charlottesville police is contradictory. On one hand, the police issued this statement: “Charges likely would not have been filed had the Charlottesville Police Department been allowed to follow the normal investigative procedures when an individual makes a criminal complaint. Instead, Mr. Crews was allowed to exploit the judicial system by bypassing CPD and presenting incomplete and misleading evidence directly to a magistrate judge who in turn issued the warrant for Mr. Harris’s arrest without a proper investigation.”

Yet, the police also said, “The victim went to the Magistrate’s offices, presented the facts of what occurred and attempted to obtain the warrant. The magistrate requested that a detective respond and verify these facts. A Charlottesville Police detective did respond, verified the facts and a warrant for Unlawful Wounding was issued.”

A cursory review of the police statement would seem to indicate that some sort of investigation was completed and the facts were verified, yet the police department stated that Harris’s arrest was the result of something less than a “proper investigation.”

Harris’s attorney, S. Lee Merritt, accused Crews of leading a campaign to “manipulate the Charlottesville judiciary and further victimize Harris.” Harris sustained a broken wrist and a head wound that required 10 staples to close. Merritt admitted that Harris “participated in some of the jeering of the white supremacists in his city, letting them know they were not welcome there, but he did not instigate any physical assault. That was done by the men carrying blunt objects and weapons.”



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Crews and other witnesses offer a different version of events. They argue that Harris and a friend were involved in an effort to take a Confederate flag away from a protester, and that Harris used a flashlight to strike Crews. Merritt counters that Crews was injured later by a white male (who was reportedly an Antifa member).

During last month's hearing for Ramos, a prosecuting attorney, Nina Atony, said that Harris had been in a scuffle with white supremacists before he ran into the Market Street garage, where his beating took place. Ramos's attorney asserts that it was Harris "who struck the first blow in that fracas."

Clearly, this will be an incident that will require the work of the criminal justice system to work out. With white supremacists, neo-Nazis, and KKK members on one side, and Antifa leftists on the other side, all with violent pedigrees, it is probable that there was violence "on all sides."

The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) has called the League of the South, which complainant Crews leads, a "hate group." But, considering that the SPLC has referred to even evangelical Christian organizations such as the D. James Kennedy Ministries as a "hate group" simply for subscribing to the historic Christian faith, it is difficult to take their word for much of anything.

What is clear is that extremist groups tend to grow their membership rolls following violent confrontations as occurred in Virginia.



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