

18-year-old accused of attacking homeless in Grants Pass park faces felony charges

By Chris Bremer
of the Daily Courier

Prosecutors filed felony charges Friday against an 18-year-old accused of randomly attacking homeless people at a Grants Pass park.

Peterson Pearce Altonai was arraigned in Josephine County Circuit Court on charges of second-degree assault and unlawful use of a weapon. Both charges are felonies. Altonai has been in custody since

Wednesday night, when he was identified as one of two young men who attacked homeless campers at Tuning Park.

Police said two young men jumped out from a car at about 12:30 p.m. and began randomly striking tents occupied by homeless campers, shouting, "Come out, home!"

Police said a 30-year-old woman who emerged from her tent during the attack was struck in the face with a stick. Video evidence from security cameras at the park and

license plate readers on patrol units subsequently led to the suspect's arrest at his home.

The Grants Pass Police Department elaborated on the arrest in a Facebook post.

The agency said officers contacted a woman at Tuning Park who had been struck across the face with a large tree branch, causing a severe laceration to her lip and bruising across her face. Her age was not released by police, court records show she is 31.

She told officers she was sleeping when she heard yelling and was struck in the face where she emerged from her tent to investigate. The two males then fled in a car after the attack.

A short time later, 911 dispatchers took reports of two males matching the description of the Tuning Park attackers now attempting to assault people at Morrison Centennial Park.

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GP brothers max out on merit badges



SCOTT STODOLSKI/Daily Courier

Eagle Scouts Chase Huffaker (left) and Derek Huffaker of Grants Pass have each earned 139 merit badges — every single one that the Boy Scouts of America offers. "It was never an option to give up" on their goal of earning every merit badge, Chase says.

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