

## Maui siblings charged in police beating

By

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WAILUKU » An off-duty Maui police officer says he was the target of a racial epithet before he was beaten by three teenagers and their fathers.

Detective Jamie Becraft testified during a preliminary hearing for brothers Leonard Saucedo Jr., 42, and Steven Saucedo, 38. They were arrested along with Leonard's two teenage sons and Steven's 16-year-old daughter.

After being charged with attempted murder, Leonard Saucedo was being held in lieu of \$235,000 bail and Steven Saucedo's bail was set at \$230,000.

Defense attorneys Thomas Kolbe and Michelle Drewyer argued against the charge, saying there was little evidence either man inflicted blows to Becraft's head.

But Judge Kelsey Kawano ruled Wednesday there was probable cause. The men are scheduled to be arraigned April 21.

Becraft, a 20-year veteran, testified that when he asked a youth on Saturday night why he was damaging mailboxes along Kahekili Highway, the youth responded: "(Expletive) you, you (expletive) haole.";

When he told the boy he was under arrest, Becraft said the youth lunged and tried to hit him. Then two other teens, a boy and a girl, showed up.

Becraft said he punched the second boy when he rushed toward him. The boy got up and again lunged at Becraft, who hit the boy again, causing him to fall.

The officer said the girl was screaming and moving toward him when he hit her.

Becraft said he ended up the ground, where he was kicked and punched. He said he eventually got in his house to have his wife, Velma, call 911.

Velma Becraft said she followed her husband outside, where she saw Steven Saucedo running at them with a wooden bat.

"I saw him raise the bat, and he was yelling, '(Expletive) cop, you hit my (expletive) daughter,'" she said. "That's when he swung. He hit my husband across the left side.";

Becraft managed to wrestle the bat away before Leonard Saucedo Jr. emerged with another bat, threatening the officer and saying, "You hit my son. You hit my son," ; Velma Becraft said.

The officer said he was then hit several times. He estimated, in all, being struck about 19 times with the bats.

"Those blows were deadly in nature, especially when they were uppercuts to his body,"; Deputy Prosecutor Jerrie Sheppard said. "He almost lost consciousness. His wife defended him. Because she was able to wield the bat against his attackers, Mr. Becraft was able to stay on his feet. That's a sheer will to live.";

As police sirens neared, some left the area. However, Leonard Saucedo Jr. stayed and used the bat to damage a parked truck, breaking the headlights, shattering the windshield and denting the hood, right fender, bed and a door, Velma Becraft said.

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