

Middleburg High Resource Officer Hospitalized In Fight With Student

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JACKSONVILLE, Fla. -- A school resource officer at Middleburg High was hospitalized Friday after a fight with an 18-year-old student. Clay County Deputy Sheriff James Avery was transported to Shands Jacksonville with head injuries and a severe bite wound to his hand.

Cory Roussell has been charged with three felony counts for battery on a law enforcement officer, depriving a law enforcement officer of communications equipment and resisting arrest with violence. He was also charged with two misdemeanors for trespassing and disruption of school functions.

According to Clay County officials, Roussell was suspended Thursday for cursing and making obscene gestures at a teacher. When he arrived on campus Friday for the senior class picnic and was told he would not be allowed to attend, the student became hostile.

Cory Roussell

"The deputy had warned him several times to stop and that he's trespassing for continuing on, and then a scuffle ensued between the deputy and the student," said principal David Broskie.

Authorities said Roussell repeatedly punched Avery in the head and bit him on his hand. School administrators said that Avery deployed his Taser gun on the student, but that it took other adults to keep him detained.

"I'm not necessarily an opponent or a proponent about (Taser guns) in schools," said Gary Carter, a Middleburg High parent. "But I don't sometimes feel that our administration, teachers or even resource officers have the necessary tools in their hands to take care of volatile situations."

Avery was released from the hospital Friday afternoon after suffering a concussion and losing some teeth. He also received stitches for his bite wounds.

"This is certainly not a common event at Middleburg High School," said Broskie. "Obviously, the actions of the student are just unbelievable, and to strike an officer, regardless of the situation, is not appropriate. It's not indicative of students at Middleburg High School. I hope that the student involved is sorry for his actions."

Roussell will remain behind bars in the Clay County Jail until his first appearance with a judge Saturday morning. His bond will be set at that time.