

FATAL STABBING

Suspect portrayed as assailant, victim in report

Bond set at \$1 million

BY TOM LINDFORS
Contributor

The suspect in multiple stabbings on the Apple River faces homicide charges in the death of a teen and wounding of four others July 30 was portrayed in a criminal complaint as both assailant and victim.

Nicolae Miu, 52, of Prior Lake, Minnesota was arraigned in St. Croix County Circuit Court, Monday on one count of first-degree intentional homicide and four counts of attempted first-degree intentional homicide.

He faces life imprisonment on the intentional homicide charge and up to 60 years imprisonment on each of the attempted homicide charges.

Miu, represented by attorney Jeremiah Harelson, appeared by video before Judge Michael Waterman. Waterman set a conditional bond for Miu at \$1 million cash.

A status conference for the case was set for Friday, at 1:45 p.m.

The preliminary hearing for the case was set for Aug. 12, at 10 a.m.

Gruesome scene

A nine-page criminal complaint portrays Miu as both assailant and victim.

The events as related by different witnesses and documented in the interviews conducted by St. Croix County Sheriff's Deputy Mitchell Schaeppi and Lt. Brandie Hart are confusing and often contradictory.

Schaeppi's report describes deputies responding to a barrage of 911 calls at 3:47 p.m. on Saturday, July 30, and arriving at a gruesome scene alongside the Apple River near the sunrise bridge in the Town of Somerset.

According to Schaeppi's report, the 911 calls indicated there were as many as four or five victims including one whose "intestines were hanging from their body."

Deputies on the scene found one person with a puncture wound to his upper abdomen near his left breast and no vital signs. They administered lifesaving measures, but the victim was later pronounced deceased at Lakeview Hospital in Stillwater.

Four other victims including one female and three males, suffered a variety of wounds described as slash, stab, puncture and laceration wounds to their upper bodies.

Witnesses identified a suspect matching the physical description of Nicolae Miu.

A perimeter was established, and Miu was apprehended a short time later without incident at the exit point from the river in Village Park.

Wife's statement

According to Schaeppi's interview with the suspect's wife, Sondra Dee Miu, she and her husband were part of a group of friends who had been tubing on the Apple River when a member of the party lost their cell phone.

The suspect, Nicolae, volunteered to go back up river to look for the lost phone.

Wearing goggles and a snorkel, he made several attempts to find the missing phone in an area of the river by a bridge. She noted there was a group of male tubers in the vicinity of her husband.



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The suspect was identified by several witnesses and arrested by law enforcement without incident while attempting to exit the river at Village Park.

According to Sondra, at some point, that group of guys, "got off their tubes and started hitting Nicolae."

Nicolae told Sondra another group of people were calling him a pedophile and attacked him.

Sondra started screaming at which time two other members of their party started running toward the "fight."

Sondra stated that she did not see what happened and all she heard was screaming, and that Nicolae and their two friends came walking back.

Sondra acknowledged Nicolae had a knife clipped onto his pocket. She said Nicolae told her the guys grabbed it from him and swung it at him. He retrieved the knife from them and moved it away.

Sondra estimated the whole incident lasted about five minutes.

Other witnesses

According to other witnesses interviewed by deputies, a male, later identified as Nicolae Miu, was harassing a group of juveniles on their tubes. A different group of people responded to their calls for help and stood between the juveniles and Miu. They told Miu to leave. Witnesses described the scene as one where the group of people surrounding Miu formed a half-moon shape leaving Miu an opening through which he could have left the confrontation.

Miu punched or slapped a female in the group who was confronting him and was in turn punched by a male in the group and fell into the river.

According to witnesses, at that point Miu began stabbing multiple individuals near him. Witnesses described the knife as having a roughly 3-inch silver blade, with a silver clip, handle and folding.

A knife matching the description was recovered along the west bank of the river a short distance away from where the incident took place. Multiple tubes were recovered at the scene of which at least one appeared to have blood evidence on it.

Deputy Schaeppi also reported a version of events based on a video recording of the incident made by a witness.

Videos

In the video version, Miu is seen shirtless carrying goggles with a snorkel as he runs up to Cockfield's group of tubers and grabs onto their tubes. People in the tubing party are telling Miu to go away.

Miu stands up, walks around the tubers appearing to be looking for something and then begins to walk away from the tubers toward the Highway 35/64 bridge over the river. He

stops, turns around and appears to say something to the tubers while pointing at them.

Miu again turns away and begins walking toward the bridge.

As he is walking away another group of people converge on him yelling at him to walk away.

Miu then walks toward a blond female in a dark swimsuit, a member of the converging group, who appears to be pointing down river and telling Miu to go away.

In the background you can hear people saying "he was looking for little girls."

The crowd continues to grow with multiple individuals yelling at Miu and at least one person touches his shoulder.

The video appears to show people surrounding Miu on three sides.

The elapsed time on the video indicates Miu had time to leave the confrontation.

While Miu is confronted by two females from the group, he withdraws a knife from his pocket, opens the blade and holds it down at his right side.

A commotion in the crowd leads to multiple people converging on Miu. He falls backward into the water and while laying there is slapped with an open hand on the left side of his face. He is still holding the knife, blade open.

As he is getting up, he is shoved in the back by another individual. As he is getting up again, knife in hand, the individual who shoved him appears to be approaching to shove him again. When he does, Nicolae stabs him in the abdomen while being shoved back into the water on his back.

A melee ensues. Several people appear to be stabbed or slashed by Miu. There is blood on the knife, and Miu appears to have blood on his hand.

The video captures a chaotic scene with an individual bleeding and laying in the river.

Then a male matching Miu's description appears to run up the river to another male laying in the river. He leans over him as the individual is facing him and partly out of the water.

A second video confirms an individual that appears to be Miu, runs toward the southwest in the river, then stops at another individual lying in the river and appears to bend over the individual and hold him up out of the water by his right arm.

According to additional witness interviews, Madison Coen and Quinton Carlson told investigator Shilts Jr. that Miu instigated the fight when he punched Coen in the left side of her face. Madison was described as a blond wearing a dark swimsuit. According to the two witnesses, the assault on Miu began after that.

Self-defense claim

Lt. Hart interviewed Miu while he was in custody at the St. Croix County Jail.

Miu claims, it was self defense, that the crowd

came after him, that there were two weapons, that he remembered people being on top of him and hitting him and that after that he didn't remember anything except running away and meeting up with two people from his group.

He told Hart, he feared for his safety and did not know what the people on the river were going to do to him, that they produced weapons and called him a child molester.

Miu described a situation where he was snorkeling back and forth between two groups, one on each side of the river

looking for the missing cell phone. He heard someone in one of the groups say something that led him to believe that they had found something.

When he asked if they had found a cell phone, he said they came at him and began calling him names and insulting him for being in the water with snorkel gear.

Miu confirmed that while he was dealing with the first group of tubers a second group of people, mostly women, approached the area from the other side of the river and began yelling at him about being a child molester.

He remembered that a woman from that group came up behind him and hit him twice in the back of the head. He remembers someone grabbing his goggles off his face

and throwing them in the river and that a kid with a knife tried to pull his swimming trunks down.

When he grabbed the kid he saw that he had a small knife and he took the knife from him and began swinging at the people all around him who had been hitting and pushing him into the water.

Miu claims not to know what if anything the knife came into contact with.

'Happened so fast'

When Hart asked Miu if he had a knife with him that day, he at first said no, then admitted he had but was not sure what happened to it. He thought he might have left it in his Jeep or given it to someone else in his group.

Miu told Hart, "Everything happened so fast."

He didn't know why the group attacked him. He didn't know why the group took his snorkel or tried to pull his pants down and said, "I don't know why they were being so mean," and added, "Why did they want to scare me with a knife?"

When Hart told Miu that four people sustained injuries and one person died, Miu asked if the injuries were because they were fighting with each other?

When Hart answered that she did not know, Miu put his head in his hands and said, "Oh, my god."

Miu said his whole life was "down the tubes," and that he was sorry for how this ended up.

The investigation is ongoing.

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