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## Police: Framingham man assaulted two men because they are Brazilian

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By Matt Rocheleau, Globe Correspondent

A Framingham man attacked and assaulted two men Friday because they are Brazilian and has been charged with a hate crime, police said.

After being arrested, the man later acted as if he were going to commit suicide in his jail cell and then assaulted a police officer who was trying to stop the man's alleged suicide attempt, according to documents on file at the Framingham District Court.

Michael Hansberry, 46, plead not guilty to all charges at his arraignment Monday and denied the allegations in a phone interview Tuesday evening.

He was arrested Friday evening outside of the Jefferson Hills apartment complex where he lives after he kicked and pushed two Brazilian men who were moving furniture while calling them "[expletive] Brazilians" and telling them to "go back to their own country," said a police report written by the arresting Framingham Police Officer Gregory Reardon.

Reardon said in the report he "observed Mr. Hansberry going after [the two Brazilian men] when I approached the scene." And, while being transported to the town's police station, Hansberry, who police said smelled of alcohol, said "[expletive] Brazilians" approximately 20 to 25 times, the report said.

"He also told me that the Brazilians are taking over his apartment building where he has been living for eight years," said Reardon's report. "He also made several more comments regarding his hatred for the two men because they were Brazilian and was mad that I took the Brazilians' side."

Brazilians have a large presence in the suburban town, and some Framingham residents have outspokenly voiced their displeasure in the rising population.

A Framingham-based group was formed in 2003 against illegal immigrants in the area. The group, Concerned Citizens and Friends of Illegal Immigration Law Enforcement, tends to focus their concern on the high concentration of Brazilians, of which around 71 percent are believed to be in the country illegally, according to [a recent study](#).

Lt. Craig Davis said Framingham police have encountered similar hate crimes in the past, but feels this was an isolated incident and not part of a trend.

"Have we seen this sort of thing before? Yes, we have. Is it frequent? No, it isn't," Davis said.

Hansberry was charged with two counts of hate crime, two counts of assault and battery, one count of assault and battery with a dangerous weapon (boot) and disorderly conduct.

However, Hansberry plead not guilty to at his arraignment Monday and said in an interview Tuesday that the altercation Friday was a misunderstanding that got out of hand.

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"I told them to learn to speak English, but I was just joking," he said. "They just took it personally ... I didn't mean any harm by what I said."

He said he did not recall saying anything else to the two men that could have upset them, including what police reported he said.

"It wasn't a hate crime. I'm not a hateful person. I've had girlfriends who are Brazilian. I've had friends from all nationalities," added Hansberry.

He said the two Brazilians attacked him and he only acted in self defense.

The two alleged victims both live in Framingham, and one man lives at the same Route 9 apartment complex as Hansberry.

Hansberry said he had not previously encountered either man.

Davis declined to release the names of the two Brazilian men because they are considered victims of a crime.

He said he did not know whether either of the men are U.S. citizens, because "if someone is a victim of a crime we do not look into their immigration status."

Assault and battery on a police officer was also added to Hansberry's charges later Friday night when he allegedly pushed an officer who had entered his cell to stop what police believed to be his second attempt at using clothing items he was wearing to hang himself.

In his report, Reardon stated the he struck Hansberry in the face three times when Hansberry pushed him and later acted as if he was going to go after him. Hansberry was transported to a hospital shortly thereafter.

Hansberry denied attempting suicide, said he was abused by police, now has two black eyes and has suffered memory loss regarding that day's events.

The Waltham native has a lengthy criminal record and multiple restraining orders have been filed against him in past years, according to court filings.

Hansberry posted the \$500 bail set for his most-recent charges and was conditionally released. He is due back in court on Dec. 4 for a pre-trial hearing.

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