



CITY OF ONEIDA
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
BUREAU OF POLICE



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Steven Lowell
Chief of Police

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Authorized by: Steven Lowell, Chief of Police

Date: March 31, 2026

Subject: Police Officer Injured During Removal of Illegal Encampment

On March 31, 2026, at approximately 10:40 a.m., members of the Oneida Police Department were assisting with the removal of individuals occupying an illegal residential encampment located on City property adjacent to the Oneida Rail Trail.

While officers were attempting to make contact with individuals inside a makeshift tent within the encampment, one individual, identified as Thomas Bettis, exited the tent and aggressively charged at officers while holding a large stick. Bettis proceeded to swing the stick, striking one officer multiple times.

In response to the immediate threat, another officer deployed a conductive energy device (Taser), successfully subduing Bettis. He was taken into custody without further incident.

A second individual at the scene, identified as Nicole Becraft, was also taken into custody. She was transported to the Oneida Police Department and processed without incident.

Both Thomas Bettis and Nicole Becraft were charged with Obstruction in Public Places, Littering, and Trespass.

In addition, Thomas Bettis was charged with:

- Two counts of Menacing in the Second Degree (Class A Misdemeanor)
- Obstructing Governmental Administration (Class A Misdemeanor)
- Resisting Arrest (Class A Misdemeanor)
- Criminal Possession of a Weapon in the Third Degree (Class D Felony)
- Assault in the Second Degree (Class D Felony)

The injured officer sustained non-life-threatening injuries and was transported to Oneida Hospital for treatment. The officer has since been treated and released.

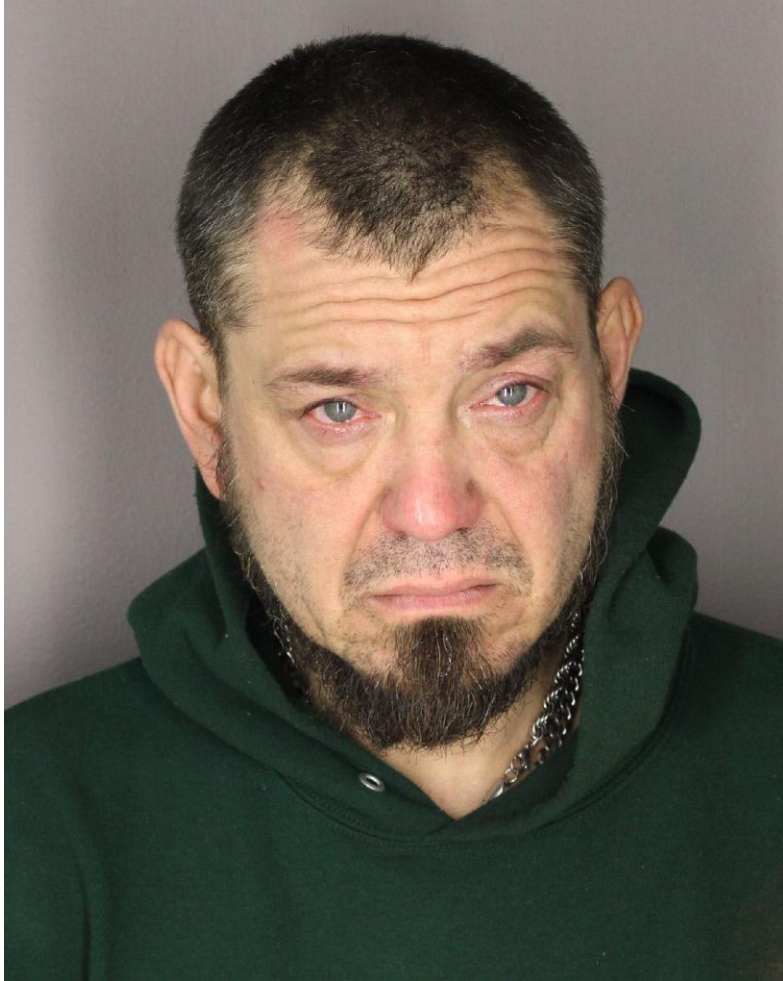
Thomas Bettis was arraigned in Oneida City Court. Nicole Becraft was issued an appearance ticket and released.

“This incident underscores the inherent risks our officers face, even during routine enforcement actions. It also highlights the critical importance of continual, scenario-based training to ensure our officers remain sharp, make sound decisions under pressure, and respond appropriately to rapidly evolving threats. The professionalism and preparedness

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demonstrated by our personnel directly contributed to bringing this dangerous situation under control safely.”

The investigation remains ongoing.



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