

Brawley aunt, adviser plead innocent in court brawl

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

■ NEW YORK — Two lawyers for a black teen-ager who claimed she was raped by six white men were released Saturday and the girl's adviser and aunt pleaded innocent to misdemeanor charges stemming from a courtroom brawl.

Seventeen people were arrested after the scuffle broke out Friday at Brooklyn Criminal Court. Sixteen court officers and two demonstrators sustained minor injuries.

The incident occurred after the Rev. Al Sharpton, the New York black activist who is advising Tawana Brawley, and several co-defendants and supporters refused to leave the courtroom following a hearing on contempt charges stemming from a Sept. 29 demonstration.

At the hearing, Criminal Court Judge Michael Nadel denied a motion from Sharpton's lawyer to dismiss charges.

The Sept. 29 demonstration, which tied up traffic in violation of a court order, was organized to protest a grand jury finding that Miss Brawley had made up her story of abduction and rape.

Attorneys William Kunstler and C. Vernon Mason and five others were released Saturday.

"At this point, we have deferred prosecution pending a further investigation," said Glenn Goldberg, spokesman for District Attorney Elizabeth Holtzman.

Sharpton, Juanita Brawley and eight others pleaded innocent late Saturday to a variety of misdemeanor charges, Goldberg said.

Sharpton faced charges of unlawful assembly and third-degree criminal trespass, said Goldberg. Juanita Brawley faced charges of criminal impersonation for allegedly giving a false name to police, he said.



Charles Strader



Clarence Solander

Veteran finally meets his WWII rescuers

By JOHN FULMER

JACKSON COUNTY BUREAU

■ It took him 44 years, but on Saturday, Charles Strader finally hooked up with the men who saved him after the most harrowing 24 hours of his life.

In 1944, Strader, an Army Air Force lieutenant, was on a strafing run against Japanese warships in the South Pacific. His P-38 was shot down, and Strader dropped into the ocean. He sank 40 feet before he pulled himself out of the plane.

For 24 hours, Strader, floating among enemy vessels, hid himself by turning his partially inflated yellow life raft upside down. The life raft's blue bottom camouflaged him until he heard friendly aircraft and signaled them with a mirror.

A crew from the 2nd Emergency Rescue Squadron of the 13th Army Air Force pulled Strader from the sea as more P-38s kept Japanese ships at bay.

He was in shock and suffering from exposure. Strader never had time to thank the men who saved him. They had flown more than 900 miles to pick up Strader in what was the longest

rescue mission of World War II.

Over the years, the significance of the rescue grew in Strader's mind. He began looking in magazines that announced veterans reunions and found that the 2nd Emergency Rescue Squadron was meeting in Biloxi on October 1988.

Strader, now 65 and a retired radar installer from Gulf Breeze, Fla., began corresponding with members of the rescue squad. On Saturday, he met up with Clarence Solander, 71, and other members of the group at the Biloxi Beach Resort Motor Inn.

"The war was going on, and there was no time to think about it," Strader said. "But you realize later if it weren't for these men, I wouldn't be alive. I would have never raised a family."

Solander, also retired, now lives in Stambaugh, Mich. In the years since World War II, he has never met with any of the 700 men his group picked up in the 18 months they operated.

"We were happy to see him," he said. "We're pleased to have him here."