Waiter Facing Charges After Spitting On Customers

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FORT LAUDERDALE --— An afternoon of margaritas and a hookah at The Rock Bar on Fort Lauderdale Beach spiraled downwards from fun to a confrontation that led to two black college students alleging they had been spat upon and a waiter being suspended.

The incident took place in the parking lot next to the bar at 219 S. Atlantic Blvd., when server Milan Spasojevic left his post and followed Alexis Frazier and her cousin Daneshia Toomer to their car. The women left a $2 tip for Spasojevic on a $38 tab and after he saw it he started “screaming at us like a crazy man,” Frazier said.

Police were called and Spasojevic, who is identified as a 37-year-old white male, was cited for misdemeanor simple battery.

“You can’t spit on someone,” said Fort Lauderdale police public information officer Det. DeAnna Greenlaw.

Frazier, 22, said the department will file formal charges against Spasojevic.

Frazier and Toomer, both Florida A&M University students, were home for a vacation, Toomer, 25, said. Toomer said they stopped at Rock Bar to try the hookah and Spasojevic told them they couldn’t have the hookah alone but had to order food or drinks. They ordered margaritas.

Spasojevic gave Frazier and Toomer their bill, which included a 15 percent gratuity charge.

“He didn’t really give us service. He just brought us the hookah and the drinks he said we had to order,” Toomer said. “We had just eaten at Beach Place.”

Frazier said she asked Spasojevic to remove the 15 percent gratuity charge from the bill. Spasojevic said he agreed and asked if anything was wrong with the service. He said the women said no, that his service was good and that the reason they wanted the gratuity removed was so that one could pay by credit card and other by cash. He said they agreed to leave him a cash tip. When he returned, they were gone, leaving behind a $2 tip – $5 shy of the $7 he was expecting.

“I exploded,” Spasojevic said. “I felt like they treated me like I was a slave and not a server. I don’t work for free.”

Spasojevic followed the women to a parking lot at the southwest side of East Las Olas Boulevard and Highway AIA, shouting and screaming. He admitted spitting and said it was in disgust, as was customary in his Serbian culture. He told the South Florida Times he spat on the ground but according to the police report he told officers he spat at the car.

Toomer said she was hit by spit that flew through their car’s half-open passenger’s side window.

Tammy Wekerle of Fort Lauderdale said she and her daughter watched the scene unfold. She said Spasojevic was screaming and hurling insults at the women and a small crowd that gathered did not intervene.

Wekerle contradicted Spasojevic’s claim that he spat on the ground. She said he spat through the car window, hitting the women, and she took some paper and wiped the spit off Toomer, who, she said, was crying and hysterical.

“At first I thought that they didn’t pay the bill and then I found out he was enraged because he didn’t get tipped enough,” said Wekerle, who is white. “If it were two little white girls sitting in that car, it would have gone down differently.”

The women called police and Wekerle told the manager what had taken place. Spasojevic told police that he did not spit on the girls, only at the car. “I never spit in their face,” Spasojevic said.

Spasojevic told the South Florida Times he was ashamed at how he behaved and was truly sorry but insisted he felt he was treated poorly by the girls. He said his action had nothing to do with race. “I have a lot of black friends,” he said.

Rock Bar’s general manager Jay Oliveira was at the restaurant when Spasojevic left his post to follow Frazier and Toomer to their car. He said Spasojevic was upset about his tip because all he makes is minimum wage and tips are his pay.

Oliveira said he suspended Spasojevic for two weeks without pay for shouting at the customers. He said he was unaware of any spitting. Spasojevic however, was back at work one week after the Aug. 13 incident. He has worked at Rock Bar for four years.

“There are so many things going on, and all you can find to write about is a fight at a restaurant?” Oliveira said.

Frazier said Oliveira offered to make it up to her on her next visit to The Rock Bar.

“I declined,” she said. “I am never going back there.”