

51-Year-Old Man Punches 11-Year-Old Girl At NC Mall

David Lohr

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Police in North Carolina arrested a 51-year-old man accused of striking a preteen girl in an incident that was apparently caught on video.

According to Asheville police, David Steven Bell, of Black Mountain, has been charged with assault on a child under 12 and two counts of assault on a female.

Authorities said the alleged assaults occurred at the Asheville Mall on Jan. 12. Bell is accused of pushing and punching an 11-year-old girl and of assaulting two 13-year-old girls. The circumstances leading up to the incident are still under investigation, police said.

The video below posted to YouTube appears to show the alleged assault and may be upsetting to some readers. A man, purportedly Bell, in a gray pullover is seen in a crowd of young people. He is pushed, and responds by pushing a girl and then striking her in the face.

Bell is scheduled to appear in court on Feb. 5, [the Asheville Citizen Times reported](#).



Lawyer Claims Man Who Punched 11-Year-Old Girl Was Defending Himself

David Lohr

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David Steven Bell, the 6-foot-5, 250-pound man facing charges for punching a preteen girl at a North Carolina mall, was acting in self-defense and suffers from various medical conditions, according to his lawyer.

“His actions were in an effort to defend himself against the perceived threat from a large pack of youth who had trapped and surrounded him,” [attorney Andy Banzhoff told The Asheville Citizen-Times](#).

Banzhoff, who did not return calls for comment from HuffPost, also said Bell, 51, is being treated for a traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder. A [copy of the arrest report](#) obtained by HuffPost on Thursday lists Bell as “disabled” in the section asking for an employer.

Banzhoff did not detail the cause of his client’s alleged medical issues or say whether they will be used as a defense in court.

Asheville police arrested Bell on Jan. 12 after he allegedly pushed and punched an 11-year-old girl and assaulted two 13-year-old girls at the Asheville Mall. A video that appears to show the alleged assault [went viral after it was posted online](#).

Bell, of Black Mountain, was arrested and charged with assaulting a child under 12 and two counts of assault on a female. The circumstances leading up to the incident are still under investigation, police said.

Banzhoff told the Asheville newspaper that Bell was leaving the mall when he saw a woman being harassed by “a large pack of youths.” The attorney said Bell was surrounded by the youths when he escorted the woman to an exit.

Things turned physical, Banzhoff said, when a young female shoved Bell and then another girl stepped forward in an “aggressive manner.” Bell pushed the youth away, which caused her to lose her balance and fall, the lawyer said.

“She then got to her feet and aggressively charged in the direction of Mr. Bell,” Banzhoff said. “As she entered Mr. Bell’s personal space, he struck her with his closed fist.”

Bell is white and the girl he punched is black.

“His actions were not motivated by any animus towards the persons in that group,” Banzhoff said. “Mr. Bell’s belief is that all persons are created equal and that we are all children of God.”

Bell and his family, the attorney added, are praying for “those impacted by this unfortunate incident.”

Bell is scheduled to appear in court on Feb. 5.