

Increased security too late for victim of attack

By LILA FUJIMOTO, Staff Writer

Sunday, November 25, 2007 8:32 AM

KIHEI – On a Saturday night in April, Webster Pedrick was walking to his car when he thought he heard an aggressive male voice behind him in a dark parking lot near Kihei Kalama Village.

“The very next thing I knew I was standing and I had a cop in front of me with a flashlight,” Pedrick said. “I was very disoriented and confused. I realized very quickly that I was severely injured.”

While Pedrick has no memory of the attack that left him hospitalized for three days, he’s hoping that others with information will come forward.

By talking about what happened to him, Pedrick said he also hopes to focus attention on dangers in the area that he didn’t know about until the night he was beaten and robbed.

“I had never been in a fight on Maui, ever,” said the 34-year-old, who at the time was a professional windsurfer living in Paia. “Since it happened, I hear this is a very dangerous place.

“I wasn’t aware of it until afterwards, which is a shame.”

The assault on Pedrick, whose wallet was stolen, was among 123 cases to which police responded at Kihei Kalama Village in March and April. The number of crime reports for the two months was more than six times the 19 cases reported during the same period last year.

Police say much of the trouble has stemmed from the concentration of bars at the commercial complex across from Kalama Park along South Kihei Road. Most calls to police occur between midnight and 3 a.m. on weekends.

Eight businesses in the complex have liquor licenses, although not all remain open past midnight.

Police and county liquor control officials, who have met with bar owners and the complex’s property manager, said they’ve seen improvements in recent months.

Delta Security, which was hired by the complex to supplement bouncers at individual bars, has “been doing a great job,” said Kihei patrol Sgt. Mervin Ching, who has monitored reports of criminal activity at Kihei Kalama Village for police.

The increased security has helped free Kihei police officers to respond to other emergencies in the district that has seen a 45 percent increase in arrests so far this year compared to the same period last year, Ching said.

But he said police are still responding to the complex to assist security guards.

One recent night, after bar closing time, customers spilled out of Life's A Beach and into the Kihei Town Center parking lot, where fights broke out, Ching said.

On a previous Friday night, he said police made five arrests throughout the complex within 15 or 20 minutes.

"It has slowed down, but it's still happening," Ching said.

Wayne Pagan, deputy director of the Maui County Department of Liquor Control, said he hadn't heard about any major problems at the complex recently.

"I'm pretty sure everybody is trying to do what is right," he said. "Licensees try to do their best. They don't want that kind of attention. And people don't want to go to a place that has problems."

Pedrick said he had gone with two friends to the Bada Bing bar in the complex at about 11:30 p.m. April 14. The bar was so crowded, he said, that he told his friends he was going out to his car to get a drink of water.

He had walked to the dark parking lot and was about 20 yards from his car when he was attacked.

"I was definitely hit from behind," Pedrick said. "The last thing I remember was looking at my car with no one in sight.

"I don't think one person would go after me like that. It felt like I walked into a trap."

Later Pedrick was told that two carpenters came to his aid as four or five men were dragging the 6-foot, 170-pound athlete, managing to carry him about 10 yards toward a trailer.

Police, who responded to the call of an assault at about 12:30 a.m. April 15, reported having no suspects in the robbery.

Pedrick said he had been in the bar for only a short time that night and hadn't talked to anyone there except for his friends.

He suffered a concussion, as well as a broken bone in his hand, puncture wound on his arm, and contusions on his neck, upper back and chest. His jaw was broken in four places and he lost four teeth.

In his wallet, Pedrick had \$100 cash, credit cards, his driver's license and contact information for people he had met over the years.

Instead of participating in filming for a Japanese windsurfing movie two days later, Pedrick was in the hospital, where he received treatment, including 40 staples in his head and 25 stitches in his face.

As he continues to recover, Pedrick estimated he faces about \$30,000 in medical bills, including the cost of dental implants.

"I'm still not looking like I used to," he said.

He spoke by telephone this week from Santa Cruz, Calif., where he is studying Web design at Cabrillo College.

He had spent 10 windsurfing seasons on Maui before leaving after being assaulted. "I am not comfortable there anymore," he said. "Definitely, it's changed my whole feeling about living there.

"I'm just hoping that somehow we can help bring awareness to the problem so it can be stopped. It's just not right. I don't understand at all why people would do this to people they don't know. There's definitely a serious underlying problem that needs to be addressed."

Pedrick's attorney, Michelle Drewyer, is asking anyone with information on the assault on Pedrick or similar incidents to call her at 244-7011.

"We just hope that somebody saw something and can give us some leads," she said.

Lila Fujimoto can be reached at lfujimoto@mauinews.com.

Copyright © 2007 The Maui News.