

Suspended Doctor Charged In Rape of 15-Year-Old Boy

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CAMBRIDGE - The Boston doctor under fire for abandoning an unconscious surgery patient to go to the bank was arrested yesterday and charged with the alleged rape of a 15-year-old youth he picked up in Central Square.

Police last night held Dr. David C. Arndt, 45, in the station lockup in lieu of \$250,000 bail. He was scheduled for arraignment in Cambridge District Court today on three counts of child rape and one count of indecent assault and battery on a person over 14.

According to Middlesex County prosecutors, Arndt spotted the male youth on a street near Central Square on Sept. 5 and allegedly lured him into his car. The two had never met before, said prosecutors. Arndt then repeatedly raped the boy in the car, they allege.

The boy reported the alleged attack to police Monday morning. Police searched for Arndt's car throughout Cambridge yesterday, finally spotting him driving near Central Square, a police spokesman said. He was arrested without a struggle.

The boy last evening was at home with his parents.

"It wasn't like a kidnapping," said Cambridge police spokesman Frank Pasquarello. "He wasn't forced into the car."

Claudia A. Hunter, a lawyer representing Arndt in the suspension of his medical license, was reached last night but said she was unaware of the criminal case.

The arrest marks the most serious turn in the Harvard-trained orthopedic surgeon's recent troubles, which include tangles with the courts and medical disciplinary system. Most recently, Arndt's name was found on prescription slips at the scene of an alleged drug dealer's arrest last week.

On July 10, Arndt abandoned an anesthetized patient at Mount Auburn Hospital in Cambridge six hours into back surgery in order to deposit a check in a nearby bank, according to the state medical board. He returned 35 minutes later and successfully completed the surgery, according to the medical board.

Arndt explained to colleagues that "a financial crisis" forced him to run to the bank, according to the board.

The medical board suspended Arndt's medical license on Aug. 7, calling him "an immediate and serious threat to the health, safety, and welfare of the public." Arndt has vowed to fight the suspension, but has not disputed the allegations.

The case has prompted widespread outrage, and his patient has been interviewed on national television shows. The case opened the door into Arndt's seemingly troubled recent past.

On Sept. 4, a law enforcement official disclosed a possible connection between Arndt and a drug dealer arrested in June at a downtown Boston hotel. The official said prescription slips signed by Arndt were found at the arrest scene.

In October 2000, a Suffolk County judge ordered Arndt to turn over 9 percent of his income for the next 15 years to a former domestic partner who bankrolled Arndt's medical schooling in exchange for future financial support, according to court records. Arndt unsuccessfully protested the order, contending that his partner, a psychiatrist, emotionally manipulated him into signing the agreement.

In 1998, Arndt pleaded guilty to falsifying an immigration document in an attempt to illegally obtain a US passport for his Venezuelan boyfriend. Arndt called it "the dumbest thing" he ever did.

That same year, Arndt faced assault charges for allegedly breaking into a Provincetown house and attacking a man he found with his domestic partner. After he agreed to pretrial probation, the charges were dropped.

Arndt has specialized in certain back surgeries, practicing at several Boston area hospitals, though he is presently not authorized to work anywhere in the state. He has not renewed his practicing privileges at New England Baptist Hospital, where he occasionally performed surgeries from November 1999 to last April. His privileges at Brigham and Women's Hospital ended in June 2001, as they did at Harvard Vanguard in September 2001, both for unspecified reasons.

And at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, his privileges were suspended after the Mt. Auburn surgery incident.