

Fifth defendant arrested in connection with violent 2014 Elizabeth robbery

A fifth defendant has been arrested and charged in connection with the violent 2014 robbery of an Elizabeth scrap metal yard, acting Union County Prosecutor Grace H. Park announced Monday.

Anthony S. Brailsford, 28, of Irvington is charged with first-degree kidnapping, first-degree robbery, second-degree aggravated assault, two second-degree weapons offenses, and third-degree resisting arrest.

On April 18, 2014, Elizabeth Police Department patrol units responded to the Bayway Scrap Metal yard on Amboy Avenue to find multiple victims with visible injuries who reported that they had just been held hostage and physically assaulted by several men armed with firearms, according to Union County Assistant Prosecutor Jeremiah Lenihan, who is prosecuting the case.

The victims were bound at the hands and feet with zip ties as the defendants stole their personal property, including wallets and cash, and filled a trailer with catalytic converters, Lenihan said. They then fled the area in two vehicles, one a stolen pickup truck.

Moments later, the suspects were spotted on Spring Street, resulting in a brief police pursuit in which one of the defendants fired a handgun at police and the officers returned fire (no one was injured). After their vehicles crashed, four of the five were arrested and transported to Union County Jail on \$1 million bail apiece. Brailsford remained at large until he was arrested Friday.

Brailsford's four co-defendants in the case – 25-year-old Michael Howard, 30-year-old Steven Chambers, and 42-year-old Sharod Saunders, all of Newark, as well as Rafael Clemmons, 29, of Irvington – are awaiting trial after a Union County grand jury returned a 57-count indictment against them.

Convictions on first-degree criminal charges are commonly punishable by 10 to 20 years in state prison.

These criminal charges are mere accusations. Each defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.