PRESIDENT NO MORE  John Wyatt Finlay, age 30, was stripped of his former position as the head of the GW Interactive Zoo after he was accused of assaulting his former domestic partner and three other staff members on August 18. [Promotional image courtesy of GW Zoo]

By Shannon Kile

An attack by a staff member against his former domestic partner at the local exotic animal zoo has resulted in criminal charges. The incident occurred in the early afternoon of Monday, August 18, say GW Interactive Zoo staff who summoned law enforcement officers for assistance.

According to GW Entertainment Director Joe Schreibvogel and other staff members present, Zoo President, John Finlay came to the facility to take part in a board meeting to discuss his status after leaving the zoo grounds previously on August 6, following a heated domestic argument with Schreibvogel.

Finlay and Schreibvogel had been in a relationship for eleven years. The two men reportedly considered themselves a married couple, along with the later addition of a third man, Travis Maldonado, who also works at the zoo. The trio cohabitated together on the grounds until the violent break up two weeks ago.

Schreibvogel also alleged previous acts of violence against him by Finlay that he did not previously report. He showed photos of himself hospitalized due to blows he said were delivered by Finlay previously.

Due to the domestic breakup two weeks prior, Finlay's supervisory status was unknown and the zoo board moved to rectify it, hence the scheduled meeting.

On Monday, Finlay arrived armed with a holstered semi-automatic pistol which he had to be coaxed into surrendering prior to the meeting, according to video surveillance footage. Things quickly went bad to worse, according to the same footage and Finlay quickly attacked Schreibvogel, at one point rushing over a picnic table to get at him.

Finlay was restrained by nearby zoo security staff while law enforcement was summoned, though he managed to escape the park in a vehicle heading into Murray County along State Highway 77. A total of four staff members including Schreibvogel claimed to have been assaulted in the altercation.

Finlay was later detained by a pursuing Garvin County Deputy along the roadway and escorted to the Garvin County Sheriff's Office in Pauls Valley for questioning.

Investigating deputies seized Finlay's pistol, pursued video footage of the incident and took statements from the staff members present. After conducting the interview and collecting other evidence and statements, Garvin County Deputies arrested 30-year-old John Wyatt Finlay on August 18, charging him initially with one count of Domestic Abuse--Assault and Battery, misdemeanor.

He was held without bond after arraigned on August 19 in Garvin County District Court for the charge, as well as two additional misdemeanor charges of assault at battery stemming from his altercation with the other zoo staff.

He was eventually granted $2,000 bond and at press time was awaiting release from the Garvin County Jail. Court records show that Finlay was previously charged with assault battery and jailed in August, 201 though those charges were ultimate dismissed.

According to a senior Garvin County Deputy close to the current investigation, additional charges related to the firearm issue could be filed at a later date, if evidence warrants.

According to GW Zoo board members, Finlay's employment with the zoo has been terminated as of August 18 and he is banned from the premises. Investigation continues.