

HIV-positive man accused of endangering girlfriend

Associated Press

LEXINGTON, Ky. — A Lexington man was arrested on wanton-endangerment charges after his girlfriend accused him of being HIV positive and of not informing her before they had sex.

Ricky Gene Cheek, 28, pleaded innocent Wednesday in Fayette District Court to fourth-degree assault and first-degree wanton endangerment. He was being held in the Fayette County Detention Center in lieu of \$5,000 cash bond.

A court-appointed attorney is expected to be assigned to Cheek's case Monday.

His arrest Tuesday night at a Lexington bar marked the first time Fayette officials had filed such a charge in connection with someone alleged to be HIV positive and to be having unprotected sex.

After speaking with Cheek's girlfriend in late August, Detective Maria Neal filed the charges and sought a warrant for Cheek's arrest. Neal said the only information she had concerning Cheek's health is what she got from his girlfriend. "I don't know if he has ... AIDS or not. I guess we will have to subpoena his medical records," Neal said.

Neal said the girlfriend has tested negative for the human immunodeficiency virus. Someone who tests positive for HIV has been exposed to the virus that causes acquired immune deficiency syndrome and can spread it to others. It does not mean the person has AIDS.

Last fall an Oregon man was sentenced to sexual abstinence for five years and house arrest for six months for withholding his HIV-positive status from a girlfriend, who was consequently infected.