

Phila. Officer to stand trial in scuffle at headquarters

Charles Bucceroni is accused of knowing he had hepatitis C when he spit at a superior. No medical proof has been shown.

By Jacqueline Soteropoulos

A prosecutor argued yesterday that because a Philadelphia police officer who spat on a superior is infected with hepatitis C, the case rises to the most serious level of aggravated assault- a felony of the first degree. Municipal Court Judge Jimmie Moore ordered 38-yea-old Charles Bucceroni to stand trial on charges of aggravated assault, terroristic threats and reckless endanger stemming from the Jan. 13 brawl at Police Headquarters. But the judge suggested that if the District Attorney's Office fails to provide medical proof that Bucceroni is infected with potentially fatal illness, it should drop the case.

Bucceroni's attorney, Charles Peruto Jr., told reporters after the hearing that his client does not have the blood borne disease. He also suggested that officers beat Bucceroni after the nine-year veteran was handcuffed. Bucceroni-who appeared in court yesterday wearing back and neck braces and a patch over his left eye-declined to discuss whether he has hepatitis C.

" I did not start any physical conflict or verbal. They started it," Bucceroni said. He was arrested after the blood-spattering fracas outside a Police Board of Inquiry hearing on a