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Richard Lee for The New York Times

Frederick Brewington, a lawyer representing several men who were injured while in prison in Nassau County, holds an enlarged photograph of Gary Boylan, who he says was "beaten into a coma" in September.

Legislators Seek U.S. Inquiry Into Nassau Jail

Continued From Page B1

suffered permanent head injuries, had been attacked by guards who should have been protecting him. "Somebody in the jail thought he was a child molester, and they were going to give him an attitude adjustment," he said.

Mr. Brewington also asserted that prisoners were frequently denied medical treatment. He cited the death last July of Christopher Jackson, 28, of Locust Valley, a sickle-cell anemia patient who was awaiting trial on a minor drug charge when he became ill and lapsed into a coma.

Mr. Brewington, who is suing the county on behalf of Mr. Jackson's family, said the State Commission of Correction was expected to issue a report soon on its inquiry into allegations that Mr. Jackson had asked for

treatment but was not hospitalized for three days, until his mother urged officials to get her son a blood transfusion.

Jail officials denied wrongdoing in these cases, but Mr. Brewington asserted that prosecutors and other county officials had failed to investigate adequately. "You've got an environment and a culture in the jail which no one from the top has done anything about," he said, adding that another client, a jail official he would not name, has recently filed a lawsuit accusing the county of violating whistle-blower rules, failing to adhere to its obligations to care for people in custody and other abuses.

Other cases suggest an earlier history of abuse. Stephen Civardi, a lawyer for Thomas Donovan Jr., 38, said his client, a mentally retarded man arrested on a charge of child sexual abuse — which was later reduced to a misdemeanor — was sav-

agely beaten by a guard within two hours of entering the jail in 1993. He suffered life-threatening injuries to his kidney and spleen and broken ribs and vertebrae, said Mr. Civardi, who is pursuing a civil rights lawsuit.

Chris P. Termini, the lawyer for Salvatore Gemelli, the guard accused in that attack, said that his client was the subject of at least four other civil rights lawsuits by inmates charging abuse that dated to 1991. Mr. Termini said that three of the cases against Mr. Gemelli, who was later elected president of the corrections officer's union, have been settled for a total of more than \$400,000.

A proposed settlement of \$500,000 in the Donovan lawsuit was rejected by the County Legislature last year. Mr. Termini said that the District Attorney, Denis Dillon, had declined to bring criminal charges against Mr. Gemelli. A trial in the civil rights case is set for next month.