

## Beating suspect already jailed

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Man's long arrest record dates to 1970s, police say, as woman continues slow, difficult recovery from assault.

By Steve Pardo

The Detroit News

PLYMOUTH TOWNSHIP — It turns out a man police were looking for in connection with a near fatal beating of a woman last year was in the Wayne County Jail on unrelated charges.

**Leevester Hathorn**, 52, was in custody when police named him in an arrest warrant and called for the public's help in finding him Wednesday. But it's good to know he's off the street, authorities said.

"We are glad that he's in custody, and I'm sure the victim is, too," Plymouth Township Detective Sgt. Steve Rapson said.

**Hathorn** was arrested in Woodhaven on March 18 on suspicion of stealing valuables from a woman's purse. He was arraigned Friday in 33rd District Court, processed and was put in jail in lieu of bond. He is expected to soon face felony charges that could land him in prison for the rest of his life.

**Hathorn** has more than 30 arrests dating to 1971, police said.

Township police held a press conference Wednesday, unaware that **Hathorn** was in custody. An arrest warrant was issued for him on five felonies, including assault with intent to murder.

"**Hathorn** gives a new meaning to the words 'habitual offender,'" Police Chief Thomas Tiderington said just hours before authorities learned he was behind bars.

The woman, who asked not to be named, has two teenage daughters. Recovery, she said Wednesday, has been slow and difficult. She has blurred vision, numbness on the left side of her head and hearing problems.

She was able to call police after the attack in the industrial park on Helm where she worked — it was a call that likely saved her life.

"They said if I hadn't been able to make that call, I would have only been able to live for 20 minutes," she said. Police said she was beaten with a metal object and spent nearly two weeks in the hospital, suffering from skull fractures and a broken nose. She praised the doctors at the University of Michigan for saving her life, even though there were so many she can't remember them all. She credits talk show host Ellen DeGeneres with keeping up her spirits. Seeing the TV talk show host dance while she recovered gave her strength, she said.

"I wish I could meet Ellen to let her know how much she helped," she said.

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