

## **Ex-con arrested in school rapes : Suspected serial rapist picked out of lineup by 16-year-old victim linked to other attacks**

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DETROIT -- An ex-convict was picked up Saturday as a suspected serial rapist who has been preying on **school** girls, Detroit's police chief said.

"The person **arrested** today may be responsible for two or three other attacks," said Chief Benny Napoleon.

Detectives had kept the unidentified suspect under surveillance for two days before picking him up outside his east-side home without a struggle around 11 a.m., police said. A 16-year-old victim picked him out of an afternoon police lineup, Napoleon said.

The 25-year-old suspect was described as unemployed man with four felony convictions for home invasion, carrying a concealed weapon, embezzlement and retail fraud.

Napoleon said police also were looking for other men. "We cannot rest because of this arrest," he said at an evening news conference also attended by Mayor Dennis Archer. "There is still another serial rapist out there."

Police are seeking a warrant today and plan to request a court order to take a DNA sample for matching against semen evidence.

"We'll have a bigger picture after the DNA is taken," Napoleon said.

Six of the seven victims were assaulted within the past two weeks, spreading fear and frustration through the city. **School** district officials Monday will work to rally the community against street attacks.

Those walking to and from **school** with greater caution include best friends Schtangela Harris and Berneea Howard of Denby Technical and Preparatory High **School** on the east side.

"I'm glad, because he's not out on the streets anymore," Howard said Saturday night. "But they still need to catch the other guy. That'll be one less rapist we have to worry about."

Neither of the 15-year-olds knew any of the **rape** victims, but both understood the horrors of such an attack. "I imagine it would be hell," Schtangela told her friend Friday. "I don't think it's right. I don't think it's fair."

Volunteers have been recruited throughout the city to take part **in** a training program Monday that is hoped to have the same momentum as the Angel's Night campaign, which sharply curtailed Halloween-related arsons. They plan to teach volunteers where to call when they see something suspicious, whether they should intervene, and, if they do, what is the best way to handle a situation.

Police have bolstered patrols and offered rides to girls walking alone.

Residents and business owners are starting to stand outside so they can watch pupils. At the **schools**, students are hearing stay-safe announcements over intercom systems, as teachers reinforce common-sense advice. Watch groups mobilize

The **rapes** also have prompted neighborhood-watch groups to put more emphasis on watching high **school** students. Previously, the groups hadn't focused on high-schoolers because they believed older students were better-equipped to handle street dangers.

But Brothers on Patrol, a group started **in** 1992 to watch students who were attending Ruddiman Middle **School** on the west side, is expected to mobilize at least 100 men to patrol streets as early as Monday.

The group and the Detroit Veterans Association met this weekend to decide which **schools** they were to patrol. Two **schools** mentioned were Denby and Central High. Several recent attacks occurred near those **schools**.

"We are going to do a blitz," said Bernard Spragner, director of Brothers on Patrol. "We have a lot of men who are committed, and they will be out there next week. The situation has always been constant. Whenever there was a child who was attacked, Brothers on Patrol said it was too many."

Other groups, such as the Million Man March Alumni Association and the New Garvey Movement, have pledged to put more men on the streets this week, Spragner said.

Kenneth Colvert of the ACT Radio Patrol, which works near Denby, would like to expand his efforts to daytime hours. But he doesn't have the manpower.

"We always have plans, but we can't do anything until we get the people," said Colvert, who met Friday with Denby Principal Ellword Miller. "We've got the equipment and the ability, but we need the people. We can't always rely on the police to be the eyes and ears of the community. We have to work with them and help them respond." Girls travel together

Girls and their parents are taking their own steps to protect themselves.

They increasingly travel **in** groups, often with other friends, and are more aware of where they can go for help **in** case of danger. They have changed their routes and are staying away from side streets, where rapists can hide **in** alleys and abandoned homes.

Parents and relatives are also doing what they can by picking up girls from **school** .

"I don't want anything to happen to them," said Stanley Howard, uncle of Berneea Howard.

Regardless of what everyone **in** the community is doing, Schtangela Harris is still exasperated with the men who are inflicting the pain on so many of her sisters.

"It hurts the girl's life, the family's life and his life," the 15-year-old said.

Detroit News staff writer Mike Wowk contributed to this report. How to stay safe

Police and **school** officials offer these suggestions for students walking to and from **school** : \* Don't take shortcuts, such as cutting through alleys or across vacant properties. \* Try to walk **in** pairs. Never walk alone to or from **school** . \* Arrive at **school** on time. Walk to **school** when most other students are heading there. \* Avoid speaking with strangers. \* Be wary of suspicious-looking vehicles. How you can help

Detroit Public **Schools** will train volunteers who'll watch students walk to and from **school** . The session is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. Monday at Martin Luther King High **School** , 3200 E. Lafayette. Volunteers will receive flashing lights and ID badges. For information, call (313) 494-2903. Where to get help \* Detroit Police **Rape** Counseling Center: (313) 833-1660. \* My Sister's Place, Detroit. Phone: (313) 961-5528 \* Interim House, Detroit: (313) 861-5300. \* Wayne County's First Step: (734) 459-5900. Scared student's poem

The following is a poem titled "My Life Is Too Much To Bear" written by a 15-year-old Detroit **school** girl who said she escaped an attempted **rape** about two weeks ago.

As I sit here and stare,

I wonder why my life is too much to bear.

My life is going through changes and fear,

I've come to a fork **in** the road, and I don't know which way to steer.

My life is too much to bear.

I'm scared for my life as I walk down certain streets

Because I'm wondering if someone or something is going to get me.

And, still, my life is too much to bear.

I feel as if some people I know don't care,

But I have to stay strong and focus because my life is too much to bear.

Caption: Photo 1: A female Denby High **School** student walks home alone. Police on Saturday **arrested** an ex-convict who is suspected of committing several recent **schoolrapes** . Ricardo Thomas / The Detroit News Photo

2: Mayor Dennis Archer confers with Chief Benny Napoleon prior to the announcement of an arrest **in** the **rapes** of Detroit **school** girls.

John Galloway

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