

GIRLS SAY THEY WERE TOO FRIGHTENED TO FLEE

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Two teenagers who said **they were** held prisoner and raped -- one of them for up **to** two weeks -- in an abandoned Detroit house testified Monday that **they** left the house several times with their captors, but still felt endangered.

One **girl**, 17, from Green Bay, Wis., said during a preliminary hearing in Detroit's 36th District Court that her captors, alleged gang members, closely guarded her and threatened **to** kill her if she tried **to** escape.

Another **girl**, 14, testified that she used marijuana and drank beer while allegedly imprisoned, and believed an escape attempt would cause her captor **to** harm her. She alleges that she was raped by five young men over a three-day period.

The two are among four **girls** from Wisconsin -- ages 14 **to** 17 -- who **say they were** raped by as many as 20 young men after **they** came **to** visit Detroit. Five people are charged: Ladsamee Lee, 20, and Van Yee Leng Chang, 17, both of Warren; and Jinabson Ang, 16, Yeng Chang, 15, and Sa Lee, 14, all of Detroit.

The defendants, held in lieu of \$1-million bonds each, **say they** are not guilty and the **girls** consented **to** sex. All the defendants face charges of first-degree criminal sexual conduct and one felony firearm charge. Testimony in the hearing will resume today.

Defense attorneys theorize the **girls** concocted the rape story **to** dodge the anger **they** would face from their parents for being away from home for so long.

Said Salle Erwin, Sa Lee's attorney: "These **girls were** having a good time. **They** 're in some trouble back home and this helps avoid that."

Authorities **say** that almost all the defendants **were** involved in a Hmong gang. The alleged victims are of Hmong descent.

Wayne County authorities indicated Monday that at least seven more young men may be charged.

In Monday's testimony, the 17-year-old Wisconsin **girl** said she came Sept. 18 **to** a Detroit home with friends, but was forced **to** leave with another group of youths. She said the group took her **to** a vacant home and as many as 20 men raped her on the first night. **They** held her captive and about five people raped her each day for about two weeks, she said.

The first man who raped her told her: "You have **to** have sex with me or I'll kill you," she said. "I was so scared I had **to** do it."

Later, the young men brought in three more **girls** , she said. **They** stopped raping her then, the **girl** said, because she was menstruating. **They** raped the other **girls** instead, she said.

One of the three new arrivals was the 14-year-old, who testified that nothing happened for the first two days. In fact, she said she slept during the eight-hour drive from Wisconsin **to** Detroit, and left the house where she was held with her captors before she was raped. After she was sexually assaulted three days into her stay, she said, the accused took her **to** a mall.

The **girl** said most of the hours during her ordeal **were** spent playing cards and talking with the other **girls** .

The 17-year-old **girl** said that a few days later, the other three **girls** escaped when the youths guarding them fell asleep. The next day, she did the same, she said.

Under cross-examination, she admitted she left the house two previous times. She said once a few of the youths took her **to** a store. **They** also took her **to** a Hmong New Year celebration at a park, she said.

But she said the youths threatened **to** kill her if she tried **to** escape or tell anyone about her situation.

She denied she was under the influence of drugs or alcohol during the alleged rapes.

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