

## **PROSECUTOR: MAN WATCHED VICTIMS FROM HIS WINDOW - HE IS ACCUSED OF RAPING IN PARK NEAR HIS HOME**

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Garnal Hilton lived a stone's throw **from** Eliza Howell Park with **his** wife and 2-year-old daughter. **From** their townhouse, they could watch the comings and goings in the park.

In a span of 48 hours this June, police and prosecutors say Hilton, accused of being a serial rapist and robber, victimized at least three couples as they visited the west side park -- robbing them and raping the women.

"You can literally look out of **his** door and see **his victim** ," said Wayne County assistant prosecutor Kenneth King. "All he would have to do is jump the fence to get to them."

Hilton, 22, of Detroit, is now on trial in Wayne County Circuit Court, charged with seven counts of first-degree criminal sexual conduct, three counts of armed robbery, three counts of assault with intent to rob while armed and three counts of using a firearm to commit a felony. If convicted, he faces up to life in prison.

During opening statements Tuesday, King said a masked Hilton used a gun on June 28 and 29, to rob couples who made late-night visits to the park, near Fenkell and I-96.

He said Hilton used the same procedure each time: forcing the couples to lie on the ground, searching them, searching their cars, and then raping the women.

King said a wallet belonging to one of the alleged **victims** was found in Hilton's home. In addition, he said Hilton's fingerprint was found on a box in one of the **victim** 's cars.

A 17-year-old woman testified Tuesday that she was in the park around 12:30 a.m. on June 28, when she and her 17-year-old boyfriend were approached by a **man** with a gun. She said the **man** searched their pockets, then forcibly raped her.

"When there is a gun to your head, you have no choice but to do what he said do," the girl, who was 16 at the time, testified.

The Free Press typically does not name **victims** of sexual assaults.

During her opening statements, Hilton's defense attorney, Kim Basen, asked the jury not to allow their fear, emotion and compassion to sway their opinions.

She said none of the alleged **victims** identified Hilton as their attacker. In addition, there is no physical evidence, such as DNA, to link Hilton to the crimes, she said.

"I think it's safe to say that on June 28 and 29, a monster came out of the darkness," Basen said.

"It's something no woman should have to deal with. It is her worse nightmare. . . . But the issue here is identification."

Another alleged **victim**, a 22-year-old woman, testified Tuesday that she was sitting in a car in the park talking with her best friend around 3 a.m., June 28, when a masked **man** forced them out of the car. The woman testified that she begged him not to hurt her.

"I have a 5-year-old son at home. Please don't kill me," she said she told him.

Still, the woman said she was raped and then offered a word of advice by her attacker: "You shouldn't come to places like this at this time of night."

Testimony continues today in Judge Gregory Bill's courtroom.

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