

OFF-DUTY OFFICER SAW RAPE SUSPECT \ ARREST CAME AFTER EAST SIDE ASSAULTS

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Detroit Police officer Gerald Thomas started **his** 18-day vacation Saturday by doing a little work around **his** east side neighborhood.

He helped arrest a man who is accused of raping nine women in the area since July.

"I guess you could say I was worried about my mother and sister," said Thomas, a two-year veteran of the 8th (Northwest) Precinct. "I was just generally alert and aware of what was going on. It's my job. And it's just my second nature."

Lt. James Arthurs said Thomas, who lives with **his** mother and sister, spotted the **suspect** Saturday night near a parking lot at East Lafayette and St. Maron Place, where detectives had set up a stakeout.

After Thomas reported **his** find, Samson Fee Koger was arrested and charged with 25 counts of **rape** . Some of the women were assaulted more than once in a single incident, Arthurs said.

Koger was ordered held in lieu of \$2.5 million bond pending a hearing Wednesday. He also is charged with armed robbery and using a firearm in a felony.

Koger contended that he is innocent and said police **coerced** him into drafting and signing **confessions** .

Executive Deputy Police Chief James Bannon disputed that contention Thursday, saying: "I am personally confident that what we got from him was legitimate."

Thomas said he's certain they arrested the right man.

He said he recognized Koger from a police composite and a flier that a resident of the Parkview Place Apartments distributed alerting residents that a rapist was on the prowl.

"I recognized him and he was acting suspicious," Thomas said.

Although he would not comment on the details of the arrest, he said: "Just growing up in the city and going to Detroit public schools, you learn how people act when they are scheming or preying on somebody. I used my instincts."

Several residents of the area were angry that they had no idea that nine women had been assaulted and robbed from July 5 through Feb. 2.

Delois Durr, 39, said she was upset that police didn't tell her and other residents about the string of **rapes** in the area, bounded by East Jefferson, Chene, McDougall and Vernor.

"I hadn't heard a thing until the paper came out with it," said Durr. "I had no kind of warning. . . . Nobody around here knew what was going on. For him to have raped so much, I think we should have known."

At Thursday's City Council meeting, councilwoman Maryann Mahaffey criticized Police Chief William Hart for not telling residents of the possible danger in their neighborhood.

"I think the public needed to know, and I don't think they were told," Mahaffey said. "I've had **calls** from people who live in that neighborhood and they knew nothing about it."

Bannon responded: "I don't think Maryann lives in that community and she doesn't know what steps we've taken. I'm not going to speculate on whether we screwed up or not."

Mahaffey replied: "Whether I live there or not is irrelevant. There are people who go in and out of that neighborhood and who live in that neighborhood who did not know or else they wouldn't be calling me outraged."

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