

Serial rape suspect held - Seven couples reported attacks in Detroit park in June; arraignment expected this week

Detroit News, The (MI) - Tuesday, July 8, 2003

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DETROIT -- Police plan to charge a suspected **serial** rapist in seven attacks on couples in Eliza Howell Park in northwest Detroit during June.

Police said a man, armed with a pistol, sneaked up on couples while they were in their cars in the park at Schoolcraft and Virgil, robbed them, forced the men into the trunks of the vehicles and then sexually assaulted the women.

After three women reported on June 28 and 29 that they were raped, undercover units posing as couples were placed in the park, said Officer Carla Williams, sex crimes unit investigator.

The 22-year-old **suspect** , who lives in the area, was seen in the wooded area about 2 a.m. Friday, Williams said. Officers watched the man hiding behind trees and bushes and crawling on the ground toward the undercover unit.

"When (he) got close to one of the cars, the officers identified themselves and (he) ran into the woods with the officers chasing him," Williams said.

The officers lost the man in the thick wooded area. Police set up a perimeter around the park. A tracking dog was called in.

"(The **suspect**), covered with mud from head to foot, was spotted as he attempted to leave the park (about an hour later) and was arrested," Williams said.

Williams said the **suspect** , who officers said had a pistol when they saw him near their car, was not armed when he was arrested.

"It appears he may have hidden the weapon somewhere in the park in the thick underbrush," she said.

In addition to the three reported **rapes** , four other women earlier had reported a man had attempted to **rape** them in the park. Williams said three of the victims have identified the **suspect** .

The Wayne County prosecutor's office is seeking warrants charging him with a variety of crimes, including seven counts of criminal sexual conduct and three counts of armed robbery.

Police expect to arraign him in Detroit's 36th District Court later this week.

"We hope with this arrest the victims will have some type of closure and will be able to continue with their lives," Williams said.

Edition: One Dot

Section: Metro

Page: 01B

Index Terms: SEX ; CRIMES ; RAPE; POLICE

Dateline: DETROIT

Record Number: det16746133

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