

GANG MEMBER SENTENCED FOR RAPE CASE CALLED WARNING TO LIVINGSTON COUNTY

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He said it was a "sex-in," a **gang** initiation rite **for** a 16- year-old girl.

A jury decided it was **rape** and Thursday, Bruce Morgan, 20, of Ann Arbor was **sentenced** to 12-25 years in prison after a trial in Howell that Prosecutor David Morse said should be a red-flag warning about the increasing presence of **gangs** in fast-growing Livingston County.

Morgan described himself as a **member** of the Schoolyard Crips in Ypsilanti, and flashed **gang** signs when his booking photo was taken after his arrest.

"We need a coherent effort from law enforcement to deal" with **gangs** , argued Dan Rose, senior trial attorney **for** the prosecutor's office, who asked **for** a more severe prison sentence **for** Morgan. "This is a defendant who is bringing not only **gangs** into Livingston County, but **gang** crime."

Rose urged Livingston County Circuit Judge Stanley Latreille to impose a sentence that would "send a message that **gang** crime will be dealt with seriously in Livingston County."

But Latreille said his role was not to send a message, but to sentence Morgan **for** "a heinous crime, offensive, criminal and brutal."

"When we start dealing with groups, we run into danger," Latreille said, citing motorcycle clubs, peace activists and long-haired hippies of years ago. "So I'm not going to deal with this as an opportunity to send a message. I will deal with this as a **rape** ."

But, Latreille added, **gang** activity was relevant because Morgan "injected **gang** membership into this **case** . **Gang** behavior, I have no doubt, promotes violence and in this **case** sexual abuse. This was a particularly horrifying **case** ."

Describing Morgan as "a hard person, even at age 20," Latreille said he hoped Morgan "and every other **gang member** will be deterred" by his sentence.

Morgan was convicted of five counts of criminal sexual conduct **for** the assault, which occurred Oct. 19, 1995, at a house in Green Oak Township.

According to court files, the girl said she met Morgan on the night of the attack when she accompanied her sister to a home where he was visiting.

The girl said Morgan and a juvenile who lived in the home forced her to have oral sex and intercourse, and at one point, tried to start a chain saw to threaten her.

Morgan was arrested the following day, after the victim's mother made her report the **rape** to police.

After Thursday's sentencing, the victim, in a barely audible voice, said she wanted Morgan in prison "as long as possible, because he said when he got out he was gonna kill me."

Records describe Morgan -- who dropped out of school in 11th grade but earned a GED and worked at a car wash -- as a difficult prisoner with a remorseless, omnipotent attitude.

Morgan's juvenile friend, 16 at the time of the attack, pleaded no contest in juvenile court to one court of criminal sexual conduct and testified against Morgan. He was **sentenced** to a juvenile detention facility.

Livingston Prosecutor Morse said there has been other evidence of **gang** activity in the county, which is a residential crossroads **for** metro Detroit, Lansing, Ann Arbor and Flint.

"It's an issue that's headed this way," he said.

Caption: Photo

Bruce Morgan ***

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