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Millstone?

Noise May Have Curbed East Rapist

A group of noisy teen-agers hanging out on a corner may have saved a Foothill Farms woman from becoming the 28th victim of the east area rapist.

Sheriff's spokesman Bill Miller said Saturday a man believed to be the same suspect who has sexually assaulted 27 other women broke into the woman's home about 11:30 p.m. Friday night.

The intruder tied up the woman, who is in her 30s, and roamed through the house for about two hours, but because of the clamor outside, Miller speculated, the man left without assaulting the intended victim.

Miller said the woman's husband was not at home at the time, but that a child slept throughout the incident.

Miller said his investigators had made contact with one of the youths believed to be in the area and expected to interview him Saturday night.

The residence chosen for the attack is near the intersection of Brett and Rebelstok drives, off Interstate 80. It was the second such attack in the area. The majority of the east area rapes have occurred in the unincorporated area of the county, but two have been just inside the city limits. One of the attacks, which have occurred over the past 18 months, was in Stockton.

Miller said there were elements of the east area rapist's method of operation missing from the Friday night attack, possibly because of the commotion outside the house. Still, he concluded, the evidence points to its being the same man.

"Investigators feel he came in, she was asleep, robbed, and she woke up to a flashlight shining in her face - same M.O. as before. She can't give any description of the guy or the weapon, or anything else. But he moved her from the bedroom to another room and tied her up."

"Shortly after that, she and the suspect heard what sounded like a bunch of noisy kids making a lot of noise and talking really loud. Right outside the house. They were out there a long time and this obviously made him (the rapist) very nervous and that's probably why he didn't do a lot of things he normally does," Miller said.

The rapist last struck Nov. 10, assaulting a 13-year-old girl after he tied up her mother.