



Texas Department of Public Safety

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Arrest made in Twilight Rapist case



The Twilight Rapist Task Force has confirmed that a man arrested Saturday in Jackson County has been positively linked to several crimes against elderly women throughout Central and South Central Texas.

Early Saturday morning, Edna police officers on routine patrol responded to a medical emergency alert activated by an elderly woman and found a man fleeing the residence. After a short foot pursuit, the suspect was taken into custody. Task Force members traveled to Edna and quickly began an investigation that resulted in Billy Joe Harris, 53, being positively linked to crimes attributed to the Twilight Rapist.

“Countless men and women worked long hours on the Task Force investigating every lead in this case for more than a year,” said DPS Director Steve McCraw. “As in many complex cases, these investigations turn quickly on a single incident. We are indebted to the brave victims and the Edna Police Department for helping solve these heinous crimes against defenseless elderly women.”

After the arrest, a Texas Ranger was flown aboard a DPS aircraft to Jackson County. With a search warrant, he obtained a DNA sample from the suspect. The aircraft returned to Waco, where crime lab personnel worked throughout the night. Through DNA, the DPS lab was able to link the suspect to five other assaults in Yoakum, and Bell, Falls and Leon counties.

Texas Rangers and local task force partners worked throughout the weekend recovering several items of evidence further linking Harris to the crimes.

The suspect lives in Missouri City, Texas and works as a non-commissioned employee for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice in Rosharon. Employment records also indicate he was employed by a home health care agency in Houston. Harris is currently being held in the Jackson County Jail on a burglary charge in connection with the Edna attack. The Task Force investigation continues, and additional charges are expected.

The first known suspected attack was in Yoakum in January 2009. As many as 12 rapes, attempted rapes or burglaries in Yoakum and Luling and in rural Leon, Bell, McLennan and Falls counties through November of 2009 led to the formation of an informal task force. The victims generally lived alone and ranged in age from 65 to 91. At Governor Rick Perry's request, DPS formalized the Task Force in January 2010.

This investigation involved the combined efforts of the DPS; police departments in Yoakum, Luling, Moody and Edna; the sheriff's offices in Leon, Falls, McLennan, Jackson and Bell counties; the Texas Department of Criminal Justice; the U.S. Marshals Service and the FBI.

"The successful development of evidence in this case is the result of the hard work of dedicated local, state and federal law enforcement officers of the Task Force and the outstanding work of Edna police officers Mike Yaws and Robert Chastain," said Texas Ranger Chief Tony Leal.

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