

DNA TIES SUSPECT TO MORE RAPES - HE'S TO BE CHARGED IN 4 SEXUAL ASSAULTS TODAY

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A 41-year-old Detroit man who police describe as a dangerous serial rapist is expected to be charged today with four sexual assaults -- including the rape of two schoolgirls.

Police said **Paul Ellis Smith** raped two girls as they walked to school during the 1998-1999 school year. In addition, police have linked him with DNA evidence to the rapes and home invasions of two women on the city's far east side during the same period.

Smith has been charged in a separate case in which an east-side woman identified him as the man who broke into her home, raped her and then escaped on a bicycle around 4 a.m. Nov. 26. DNA evidence found on the woman matches Smith's.

He was arraigned Wednesday on charges of first-degree criminal sexual conduct and home invasion in that case.

Police initially overlooked Smith as a suspect during the string of schoolgirl and adult rapes because he was in jail for parole violation. Smith was convicted of a sexual assault in 1980 and of armed robbery in 1991.

"But back in June, he got out of jail," said Lt. Michael Walsh of the Detroit Police sex-crimes unit.

Ten schoolgirl rapes were reported during the 1998-99 school year. Most occurred on the city's east side behind vacant buildings, garages or in alleys. Most of the girls were walking alone.

Smith was arrested by Grosse Pointe Park police on Nov. 26 for suspicion of attempted home invasion and obstructing a police officer. While in custody, Grosse Pointe investigators noticed the man resembled a computer-generated image of a man wanted in a Detroit sexual assault.

Smith is expected to be arraigned today on charges of first-degree criminal sexual conduct in connection with the rape of a 14-year-old girl in 1998 and a 16-year-old in 1999. He also faces arraignment on charges of home invasion, armed robbery and rape in 36th District Court today in two other cases. If convicted, he faces up to life in prison.

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