

Ex-convict charged in string of rapes, home invasions

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DETROIT -- An ex-convict and suspected serial rapist has been charged in a string of early morning rapes, robberies and home invasions, including the last two unsolved assaults on Detroit teen-age girls walking to school.

Paul E. Smith, 41, of Detroit, is charged with crimes related to eight east-side cases. Arraignments in seven of the attacks took place Thursday in 36th District Court.

In addition, he's charged as a habitual offender-fourth offense. "We have now taken off the streets one of the most dangerous predators in the county," said Wayne County Prosecutor Mike Duggan.

Smith had been convicted in 1980 for a sex crime and in 1991 for armed robbery. He was locked up again more recently, mostly for parole violations, but the dates of the attacks correspond to times when Smith was out of jail.

Police had suspected him in school girl rape cases, but when those crimes continued after Smith was locked up, police began looking elsewhere.

Police Chief Charles Wilson expressed frustration that Smith appears to have cycled through the legal system. "We lock people up multiple times and they're released and commit crimes again," he said.

Police and prosecutors say DNA evidence links Smith to four sexual assaults, including those of two school girls and two women attacked during home robberies. Other victims picked Smith out of lineups, authorities say.

Grosse Pointe Park police arrested Smith Nov. 26 while he allegedly was cutting the screens on a home there.

Ex-con's new charges

Paul E. Smith is charged with eight east-side Detroit crimes:

- * Nov. 26: East-side home break-in, rape before dawn.
- * Nov. 24: Home break-in, rape.
- * July 1999: Home break-in, rape.
- * March 1999: Home break-in, rape.

* February 1999: Rape of student, 16, walking to school.

* February 1999: Home invasion, armed robbery, rape.

* December 1998: Armed robbery, rape at bus stop.

* November 1998: Rape, robbery of girl, 14, walking to school.

Caption: **Paul Ellis Smith** is charged with four sexual assaults, including the rape of two schoolgirls.

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