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Clarendon County Rape Case: How Teen Survived Ordeal

Bleeding Girl Played Dead, Then Fled

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Oather Webster lives near the mobile home where, police say, a 15-year-old Clarendon County girl was raped and stabbed Monday. Webster on Thursday discusses the girl's escape to his home.

MANNING — She lay in the bathtub where they'd left her to die after stabbing her repeatedly.

When the teen thought the coast was clear, she darted out of the trailer — a naked, bloody blur — to the safe haven of a neighbor's house.

After she stumbled up the deck, banging on windows and walls, leaving red handprints behind, Oather Webster sleepily opened his door.

“Don't hurt me, Mr. Oather,” the 15-year-old pleaded after she darted past the familiar face to the corner of the family's dining room, where she curled her body into a tight, fetal position.

Two local men have since been arrested and charged in the Monday morning rape and stabbing of the Manning teen.

The suspects also are charged in the June 20 sexual assault of a 45-year-old Summerton woman and are being investigated in connection with similar crimes in the area and elsewhere, authorities say.



Both Dustin Evans, 21, of 7780 Raccoon Road, and Jeremy Sweat, 24, of 1121 Quail Trail Circle, face two counts of kidnapping, two counts of first degree criminal sexual conduct and one count of assault with intent to kill, according to Clarendon County jail officials.

Clarendon County Sheriff's Department officers worked with the State Law Enforcement Division and U.S. marshals to find and arrest the men.

Sweat was arrested at his home Monday, and Evans was arrested Thursday morning after U.S. marshals announced a \$5,000 reward for information about his location.

At that time, Evans was considered armed and dangerous.

On Monday morning, Webster, who lives in a mobile home next to where the attacks are believed to have happened, wrapped a blanket around the girl as she began to spill the details of her two-hour ordeal.

Clearly and coherently she said: "I'm telling you this in case something happens to me and I can't tell," Webster recalled Thursday.

"You can tell what happened to me."

Webster said he saw a cut on her throat and counted more than 10 stab wounds on her back and other parts of her body.

Early that day, the victim sneaked out of her home and was waiting for friends, Webster said, when she was approached by two men in a car.

According to an arrest warrant, the victim was taken to Sweat's home and held against her will while two men raped her.

Afterward, the men told her to take a shower. That's when one or both of the men began to stab her repeatedly and attempted to slit her throat.

The pain was so intense, she told Webster, that she played dead.

“That probably saved her,” he said.

The girl has since been released from a local hospital and is doing well, officials said.

Clarendon County Chief Deputy Joe Bradham said that a month earlier, a Summerton woman, who was trying to catch a ride, was approached by two men and taken to a mobile home, also believed to be Sweat’s. There, she was tied up and repeatedly raped, he said.

She too escaped, he said, but she went too far to be able to lead police back to the home.

SLED and the marshals joined in the investigation after Monday’s attack.

“We felt that the crimes that were being committed were becoming serial in nature,” Bradham said of getting the other agencies involved.

“We were concerned that (Evans) would hurt somebody else.”

Crystal Hamilton, who considers herself Evans’ common-law wife, said he wouldn’t hurt anybody and that he was a victim of circumstance.

“This is out of character for Dustin,” she said.

“My heart really does go out to that girl’s family and the pain they’re going through right now, but I don’t see my husband ruining his chances of being with our family.”

Evans has had past run-ins with the law, including charges of driving with a suspended driver’s license and grand larceny valued at \$5,000 or more.

His most recent arrest was in March, when he was charged with entry into enclosed places.

The disposition of those charges was unavailable.

Evans, Hamilton said, had been friends with Sweat for only about a month.

Officials said they are investigating how long the two men have known each other.

Sweat’s personality, some said, made them uneasy.

Since moving in next door to Webster nearly three months ago, Sweat often avoided eye contact with him, Webster said.

He warned his children to use caution when Sweat was around.

Webster's home is sandwiched between Sweat's and another trailer and is separated by a chain-link fence.

"I told them if he called them near the fence to say, 'My father's calling me' and come in the house."

Bradham said, on first glance, Sweat's home seems abandoned. Beer bottles sit in the yard, there is little furniture inside, and clothes and trash sit on the floor.

His past is being investigated. Officials are checking whether Sweat has a criminal background in Ohio.

Hamilton claims Sweat would brag about having spent time in prison.

After what happened in Webster's neighborhood, he said he hopes the quiet community returns to normal.

As for his daughters, who knew the victim, they said they hope she gets better soon.

"She was really cool," said Danielle Webster, 16.

Her father then corrected her, saying, "She still is."

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