

## **Serial rapist on the lam**

Written by Staff Reports

Friday, 21 September 2018 08:47

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### **Suspect lures women into dark vehicle**

The McKinley County Sheriff's Office is looking for a man responsible for two McKinley County rapes, one in 2012 and the other in March of this year.

The 2012 incident occurred on Nov. 11. The victim, a 39-year-old Gallup woman, said she was with friends at the American Bar in Gallup. She said she left the bar at about about 10:30 pm and began walking home.

She had only gone a couple blocks when a man in a maroon PT Cruiser reportedly pulled up alongside her and offered her a ride home. Although she did not know the man, she said she accepted the offer.

But instead of driving her home, the man went on State Highway 602 and then drove south as the woman said she begged him to stop and let her out. He turned east on Catalpa Canyon and then made a left turn onto a gravel road.

The victim said when they got to the of the gravel road, the man stopped, got out of the car and went around to the passenger side. He then pulled her out of the vehicle and threw her to the ground.

At that point, she said the man started to pull her pants off as she fought to keep them on, but he hit her and then managed to get them off. The man hit her a couple more times, she said, and turned her over on her stomach. She said she stopped fighting because she was afraid of getting hurt.

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He then proceeded to rape her.

Once it was over, the victim said the man walked away, got back in his vehicle and drove away, leaving her to find her way back home on foot. She still had her cell phone and called police who were able to trace her call and find her.

She described the man as Hispanic and thin with short hair.

The victim was taken to a local hospital where she agreed to have a rape kit done. The exam ended up with a DNA sample, said Merle Bates, lead investigator for the MCSO, but the sample was not linked to anyone who was in the system.

The investigation eventually turned up a suspect, Bates said, but he was released when his DNA did not match the sample taken during the rape exam.

The case was cold until this past March 18, when another victim stepped forward and said she was raped under similar circumstances. The victim in this case is 49 and lived in McKinley County.

Her story began at the Shalimar. When she left the bar, she discovered she had left her keys in her car and began walking. She said a Navajo man came up and asked her if she needed a ride. She reportedly said no but the man said he had a friend who would drive her home.

At that point, another man drove up in a passenger car. The victim said she got in the back while the Navajo man got in the front. They drove around for about 90 minutes and she said it seemed to her that the two men in the front seats talked as if they knew each other.

They ended up in the hills behind the Truck Stop of America on the west end of Gallup, where the driver reportedly told the Navajo man they had a flat tire and he needed to get out to change it.

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The Navajo man said he did not know how to change a tire. The woman said she told the driver that she knew how, but he told her to stay in the car. The Navajo man got out and the driver drove away and left him.

They went down the road a little ways, according to the report, and the man told the victim he had beer in the trunk of the car.

When she got out, however, the man attacked her, pulled down her pants and raped her, she said.

After he was through, the two got back in the car at which time she accused him of assaulting her. He replied that he thought she wanted it. He got mad, she said, and told her to get out of the car and began pushing her out.

She said she grabbed the temporary tag from the window and he grabbed it back forcing her out of the vehicle. He then drove away.

The victim said she began walking back to Gallup. She managed to get across the railroad tracks where she found a store that was open, and she called 911, explaining she had been assaulted. She told the police about the Navajo man who may have still been walking back to Gallup.

An MCSO deputy responded and took her to the hospital in Fort Defiance because the Gallup hospitals did not have rape kits.

Bates said the exam also produced a DNA sample that matched the one from the 2012 case.

The female victim described her assailant as being between 20 and 30 years old, about

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5-feet-9-inches in height and having an Arabic accent. She said he had facial hair as well as slightly long wavy hair on his head. He also had a thin face with bushy eyebrows and a long nose.

Police were able to find the other man who said he did not know the driver's name.

He described the driver as Hispanic, about 35 years of age and about 5-feet-9-inches in height. He added that the man had tattoos on his arms and hands and had a light mustache and beard.

The car was described as a dark four-door sedan with a cross hanging from the rearview mirror.

***Anyone with information about the suspect is asked to contact at MCSO, (505) 722-7205, or call Crimestoppers at (888) 722-6161.***

***Staff Reports***