

Suspected rapist stands mute

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SZEMAN PAGES 49 counts for sexual attacks and robberies in Farmington Hills, Bloomfield Township, Birmingham, West Bloomfield and Independence Township. The victims described their attacker to police as a soft-spoken young man who wore a ski-mask and wielded a knife.

Judge Hand set bond at \$1 million cash. The prosecutor had requested \$1 million bond per each of the two cases.

"I feel it's probably academic," Judge Hand said, referring to Szeman's maximum 140-year sentence in Cleveland, Ohio, for the November rape of a suburban Cleveland woman. Szeman pleaded guilty to the Ohio charges.

If convicted on the 17 counts in the Farmington Hills attacks, Szeman faces maximum life sentences on the first-degree criminal sexual conduct and armed robbery charges, and 15 years each on the second-degree criminal sexual conduct charges.

Farmington Hills, Bloomfield Township and Birmingham police transferred a calm and reserved Szeman from the Correctional Receiving Center in Orient, Ohio, Wednesday morning to the 47th District Court in Farmington, the first of the district courts where he was arraigned Wednesday afternoon. Szeman later was arraigned in 48th District Court in Bloomfield Township and 52nd-District Division District Court in Independence Township.

In Bloomfield Township, Szeman also stood mute to 24 counts in connection with the attacks of six women in Birmingham, Bloomfield Township and West Bloomfield. Judge Gus O'Neill set bond at \$6 million cash. The counts included 11 counts of first-degree criminal sexual conduct, seven counts of lesser-degree criminal sexual conduct, six counts of armed robbery and two counts of breaking and entering.

Szeman was arraigned on six additional charges in Independence Township late Wednesday before Judge Gerald McNally. Bond was set at \$150,000 cash.

Szeman is expected to begin serving his maximum 140-year sentence in the Chillicothe Correctional Institution, a maximum security prison near Columbus, when the Michigan court proceedings are completed. "He is eligible for parole in Ohio after 10 years. We want to make sure he doesn't get out," Stevia told reporters waiting for Szeman's arrival with Farmington Hills police. "We're going to prosecute him as best as we can."

As for the Oakland County victims, Stevia said: "Obviously, we're not going to make their lives whole again."

AFTER THE arraignments and preliminary examinations in three district courts, Szeman is expected to be tried in Oakland County Circuit Court. But Stevia said he is uncertain which of the nine cases will be tried first. "We'll have to look at the proofs (evidence)," he said.

Stevia also confirmed that former Oakland County prosecutor L. Brooks Patterson, now in private practice in Birmingham, may try the first case against Szeman. "Because most of the investigation and warrants were done while he was prosecutor, he is interested in trying the first case," Stevia said.

Oakland County investigators linked Szeman — an Ohio trash hauling company salesman who formerly held jobs in Troy and Southfield — to several local attacks through fingerprints found on a Farmington Hills victim's wallet, blood-semen samples and personal property found in his possession that belongs to some of the victims.

The wallet, a purse, credit cards and undergarments belonging to a Farmington Hills victim were found April 2, 1988, in a dumpster in Westlake, Ohio, 3 1/4 miles from Szeman's Rocky River townhouse. Szeman had just moved to Rocky River from a rented room on Heather Heath, near 14 Mile, in West Bloomfield, where he lived for about two years. The last Oakland County victim was raped March 31, 1988, in her Farmington Hills home.

Victims ranged in age from 12-61. They included two women raped in the same Bloomfield Township house two weeks apart, two Farmington Hills sisters and a 12-year-old Bloomfield Township baby sitter.



HANDY DORST/staff photographer

District Judge Michael Hand set bond at \$500,000 for each of 17 counts against Steven A. Szeman Jr. in connection with the sexual assaults of three Farmington Hills women in late 1987 and spring 1988.

Construction will bog down I-696 traffic

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Vehicles will be coming right at you. It's going to slow people down," Maki said.

THE EXISTING two lanes in each direction on I-696 will be widened to four in each direction from Franklin Road west to I-275. An accompanying project will widen the freeway from Lahser to Franklin Road to three lanes.

Widening the existing four-lane I-696 will ease potential bottlenecks

as traffic along the new eastern leg of I-696 flows into the existing freeway running through Southfield and Farmington Hills. The project is expected to be completed by November or December, Garceau said.

Motorists will probably notice somewhat of a difference this week as they're driving the temporary lanes. "We moved lane striping over this weekend," Maki said.

On Saturday, weather permitting, motorists traveling eastbound will be moved onto temporary lanes close

er to the existing westbound lanes, which will remain where they are. "They'll be right adjacent to each other. A little close quarters," Maki said.

Reconstruction of the eastbound lanes is expected to be completed in August. Both directions of traffic will be moved to the new eastbound side. By mid-August, the former westbound lanes are expected to be torn out, Garceau said.

Though traffic will be slower, two

lanes in each direction will remain open during construction. "Even under construction, we don't have anything less than we had before," Garceau said.

IN ADDITION to widening the freeway, the Orchard Lake Road interchange will be reconstructed and widened to eight lanes. Left turns onto the freeway will be eliminated at the interchange with construction of circular ramps running northeast and southwest onto the freeway.

Vandals break home windows

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When they awoke for school at 7 a.m. Monday, the children, Lori, 16, and Jeff, 10, discovered a chunk of concrete had been tossed through the living room window.

Lemieux thinks concrete, probably taken from his property, also was used to shatter the windshields of a pickup and a car parked in his driveway.

His was the only house attacked on Hull. "I don't know why they stopped here," said Lemieux, a painter. "It's not that secluded."

He reported a similar incident last fall, when an unknown object was used to smash a car window in his driveway.

Lemieux vowed to light his property better but isn't sure that's the answer. "You can't stop people from driving down the street."

He speculated that, if the problem persists, "some homeowner's going to get mad enough and shoot somebody."

FARMINGTON HILLS police responded to the Springfield area about 1:30 a.m. Monday after homeowners heard gunshots or crashing noises.

A Springfield resident reported hearing four gunshots and two car doors slam. He then saw a red pickup back out of the attacked home on Orchard Lake Road and go north.

Although the city of Farmington has experienced a rash of rock-throwing incidents since late last year, Farmington Hills Lt. Gordon Ross is calling the vandalism in his city random and isolated.

"The same persons probably did all of the damage Monday," Ross said. "It appears they picked their victims randomly." When burglary is the motive, exterior lighting is a deterrent. But vandalism alone is hard to prevent, Ross said. "You wonder why this happened when it did," he said.

Students can earn cash in 'Be Party Smart' bash

With prom and graduation season approaching, high school students can demonstrate safe party habits and compete for a \$500 top prize in the second annual "Be Party Smart" contest, sponsored by AAA Michigan and the Office of Highway Safety Planning.

Entry deadline is April 28.

"Young adults can party without alcohol and still have a good time," said AAA Michigan safety and traffic manager Robert Cullen. "The 'Be Party Smart' program spotlights some creative ways teens can stay sober and avoid drinking and driving."

The 16 to 19 age group represented only 8 percent of the state population but was involved in 13 percent of Michigan's alcohol-related driving fatalities in 1987.

Student organizations affiliated with a high school are eligible to enter the contest by planning a non-alcoholic party.

Winning entries, to be announced in May, will be included in a "Be Party Smart" Guide distributed to high schools this fall.

Parent groups sponsoring a student party also may enter the contest. Parent entries are not eligible for prize money but their best ideas also will be included in the party guide.

ENTRIES WILL be judged on originality of the party theme and how it is demonstrated with alcohol-free drinks, snacks and activities.

First prize is \$500, with \$250 for second place, \$200 for third, \$150 for fourth and \$100 for fifth. Prizes will be awarded to student organizations or the school. The top 12 finalists also will receive "Be Party Smart" plaques.

Entries should be mailed by April 28 to "Be Party Smart" Contest, AAA Michigan Safety and Traffic, 1 Auto Club Drive, Dearborn 48128.

Acrylic Nails.....reg. \$40.00.....**\$29⁹⁹**

Pedicures by Kim.....reg. \$20.00.....**\$15⁰⁰**

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