

# Heroes from page 1A

10:30 a.m. As he was heading into the store, he saw what he first thought might be a scuffle between two youths.

"At first I thought it was a couple of guys kind of knocking each other around," he said. "Then I thought it might be a boyfriend-girlfriend problem."

As he came closer, Partin realized something more and different than a mild spat was going down.

The woman, who had just finished putting her groceries into the trunk of her car, had just got-

ten inside when a youth grabbed her by the throat and pushed her down.

"He kept choking me and said, 'don't scream,'" she said in her statement to police. "I kept screaming and kicking."

When Partin, who works for BASF in Wyandotte, realized the seriousness of the situation, he immediately grabbed the youth and held him in a bear hug against another car. Hills police had been dispatched to the parking lot on a report of a fight.

When they arrived, Partin and Mitchell, who had helped Partin keep the young man from running away, had prevented the woman from being seriously injured. She did not request medical treatment.

## Knife is found

Police found a 14-inch butcher knife, restraints and duct tape on the assailant and believe he intended to at least steal the woman's new car.

Hills Police Chief Bill Dwyer

said he feared much worse for the woman.

"We don't know what he was going to do," said Dwyer. "But if those two citizens hadn't come to her aid, we could have had a real tragedy."

Dwyer said police did not know why the youth accused of the crime had attacked the woman, but after seeing the weapons, they feared the worst.

"We don't know if he was going to kill her, abduct her, or what," he said.

Partin and Mitchell have been up under the celebrity status with

modesty, but neither man seemed particularly comfortable in their roles as heroes.

"I'm not really interested in the publicity," Partin said. "But if it is something that will show people the importance of getting involved, I'm glad to do it."

Lavar Vernon Rounph, 16, was arraigned as an adult in 47th District Court Monday on charges of assault with intent to rob while armed, which carries up to life in prison; assault with intent to commit a felony; kidnapping, which carries up to 10 years in prison or a \$5,000 fine; and as-

sault with intent to commit a felony; carrying, which carries a sentence of up to 10 years in prison or \$5,000.

Partin said he knew the young man, who was fired Dec. 13 after working at the store. Partin said although the boy was tall, he was too skinny to be a match.

"He had always been pleasant to me," he said. "When I was holding him down, he said that he had ruined his life. I told him that didn't have to be the case."

Partin said he's often at the Kroger store, where employees know him as a regular.

"I have four kids," he said. "So I'm in there a lot."

After the excitement died down and police took away the suspect and the victim who called her savior, "a wonderful man named 'Jeff,'" Partin did what he'd come to do — shop.

"I went in and bought my groceries," he said. "When I got in line, the manager opened another line and told me to bring my stuff over. When it came time to pay he asked him how much and he said, 'you're not paying.'"

Rounph, who is from Southfield, has no criminal record. He is in the Oakland County Jail without bond.

The Hills woman saved by Partin has declined to talk to the media, but had plenty to say to Chief Dwyer about the man who came to her aid.

"She told me that she considers him her guardian angel," Dwyer said.

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