

Teen testifies in gang rape one year later

By LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

She was 16 and sexually assaulted during an impromptu party at her Farmington home

while her parents were away.

She was held down while being penetrated four times, she said. She couldn't tell who was raping her because the room was dark

and she had blacked out during the alleged attack.

The girl, now 17, recalled events from that evening in a preliminary exam at 47th District Court Monday while the two males charged in the incident looked on.

Jeremy Liszewski, 17, of Farmington Hills, and Anthony Palushaj, 16, of Novi, were bound over to Oakland County Circuit Court to stand trial on one count each of first-degree and third-degree criminal sexual conduct. Both are free on \$10,000 personal bond.

An arraignment in circuit court is scheduled at 8:30 a.m. Feb. 5, before Judge Barry Howard. Liszewski and Palushaj were charged a year later after they were linked to the incident through DNA and the victim's statements. A year-wait for DNA results led to the delay in charges being filed, police said.

On May 13, 1994, Palushaj is accused of making the girl have oral sex. She later was forced to have intercourse while being held down, she testified. The victim admits drinking the equivalent of three beers during the night in question.

The rape was reported the following day. "I just tried to put it in the back of my mind," she said. "I didn't want to think about what happened to me."

Since the assault, she's been in counseling and has since moved out of her parents' home.

During testimony, she was asked to speak up repeatedly. Judge Frederick Harris sat in the last seat of the jury's box for part of the testimony, presumably to make sure she could be heard clearly.

At one point, a defense attorney asked the girl why she kept look-



STAFF PHOTO BY SHARON LEMELUX

Expert speaks: Mehhan Clement, a DNA expert, testifies during the preliminary exam for two teen-agers charged with rape.

ing to her left when answering questions.

"I'm looking at my friend... Why?" she said, visibly shaken, and added, "I have a hard time talking..."

She was baby-sitting for her two half-sisters, ages 9 and 5, when two girlfriends came to the house, according to testimony. Her father was out of town on business and her stepmother left for the evening, she said.

Her girlfriends were followed by a teenage male, who later returned with two other friends, including Liszewski.

As many as 13 teens came to the house uninvited, according to testimony.

She testified that, while she was in the basement, Palushaj took her into her father's workshop area and made her perform oral sex. She returned upstairs and said others were laughing.

She didn't call police or her stepmother, she said. "I only asked them to leave," she said. "I didn't do anything else."

"I cried a little bit but not enough to notice." The second assault occurred when she was pushed into a bed-

room and told to lay down by another teenage male, who is not being charged. The lights were turned off.

She testified she saw Liszewski in the room when her sister opened the bedroom door. When she tried to walk towards her sister, she was pushed back onto the bed.

"It was dark in there," she said, adding that there were other voices in the room. "I tried to kick someone in the face and they grabbed my legs."

Bruises were found on her arms and the back of her thighs, said prosecutor John Shakarjian.

Semen also was found on a shirt worn by the victim. A DNA expert testified that the sample taken cannot directly identify Liszewski, though odds of it being someone else would be one in 5.5 billion.

"What I can say... is that this is an extremely, extremely rare profile," said Meghan Clement, who is assistant director of Laboratory Corp. "It just so happens that Mr. Liszewski matches that profile."

Liszewski's attorney argued that it doesn't prove his client was involved in the rape.



Taking a sounding: District Judge Frederick Harris moved from the bench to the last seat in the jury box so that he could hear the rape victim's testimony.



Bound over: Teen-agers Anthony Palushaj (left) and Jeremy Liszewski will stand trial on criminal sexual conduct charges.

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