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For Immediate Release:
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Friday, Sept. 24, 2004

South Kitsap man in custody for attempted kidnapping, luring

Port Orchard, Wash. -- A 21 year-old South Kitsap man is now in jail following an investigation into a complaint of attempted kidnapping, as well as a number of other attempts to lure students into his vehicle.

The suspect was arrested earlier today at his residence in South Kitsap. He has been booked into the Kitsap County Jail on the following charges:

- (1) Attempted kidnapping (one count), bail set initially at \$50,000.
- (2) Lure a minor or a person with development disability (six counts). Bail set initially at \$50,000.
- (3) Assault, 4th degree (one count). Bail is concurrent.

The attempted kidnapping incident is alleged to have occurred shortly after 7:00 a.m., today, in the 1000 block of Fircrest Drive SE, near the Village Greens Golf Course in the unincorporated area of South Kitsap, outside the city limits of Port Orchard.

The victim, a 14 year-old female junior high school student, reported that a man driving a dark-colored Jeep Cherokee stopped his vehicle and began to ask her inappropriate, personal questions. The victim said that she ignored the driver's questions and kept walking. The man then allegedly stopped the Jeep, got out, and grabbed the girl by her arm, asking her, "Do you want to go with me?" The victim stated to investigators that she pulled her arm away and yelled at him to "Let go!" The girl reported that the male let go of her arm, got into his vehicle and drove away. The student reported the incident to her school counselor who, in turn, notified the Sheriff's Office.

The luring incidents occurred over a period of several minutes just before 8:00 a.m. in the vicinity of a school bus stop outside Manchester Elementary School, 1901 California Avenue East, also in the unincorporated area of South Kitsap. The victims were six junior high school students: one male, age 13, and five females, four age 13 & one age 14.

According to the students, a male in a dark-colored Jeep Cherokee stopped his vehicle and spoke to them as they walked to the bus stop. All reported that the driver asked them, "Are you interested in skipping school today?" All of the students declined. Some reported that the man also asked them if they wanted to baby-sit his one year-old child at his house. The students reported the incidents to their South Kitsap School District bus driver who, in turn, notified the Sheriff's Office.

Based upon a description of the male, the same in both instances, and the recorded license plate of his vehicle, Sheriff's deputies made contact with the suspect at his home later in the morning. He was taken into custody without incident and booked into jail.

It is expected that the suspect will make an initial appearance in Kitsap County Superior Court at 3:00 p.m., Monday, Sept. 27.

The Sheriff's Office investigation into these incidents continues, and there is concern that there may be other victims who may have been approached by this individual.

Suspect description:

Hispanic male, 5'10" height & 180 lbs. weight, with short brown hair, medium skin tone and hazel eyes. He has multiple tattoos on both arms and wears eye glasses.

Vehicle description: Dark-colored early 90s model Jeep Cherokee or a maroon-colored Ford Taurus.

Anyone with information concerning these or other incidents, involving a person matching the description provided above, are asked to contact Detective Sgt. Eric Bockelie at (360) 337-7111.

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