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Woman's Report of Park Rape Is Termed False

By KIT R. ROANE APRIL 15, 1998

A report by a woman who said she was abducted at gunpoint and raped by three men in Flushing Meadows-Corona Park on Sunday night was false, the Queens District Attorney's office said yesterday.

"The District Attorney's office wants to dispel any fear that there is a rapist on the loose with some confederates and a gun attacking women in the park," said Mary de Bourbon, a spokeswoman for the District Attorney. "Based on what we now know, no rape occurred in the park on Sunday night."

The woman, 21, had told the police that she was riding her bicycle through the park about 7:30 P.M. on Sunday when three young men accosted her and dragged her behind some trees near the Queens Zoo, near 49th Avenue and 111th Street. She said that one man menaced her with a gun and raped her in the crowded park, where an estimated 100,000 people were out celebrating Easter with egg hunts and cookouts.

But a law enforcement investigator who spoke on condition of anonymity said that the woman's story began to unravel yesterday after two men were picked up for questioning about the attack. According to the investigator, the woman began to waver on whether there was a gun involved, as well as on the number of suspects and the nature of the assault.

The investigator said that the police believe that the woman encountered the two men on Sunday afternoon and agreed to meet them a short time later. While a sexual act occurred, the investigator said, the police believe it was consensual.

Detective Robert Samuel, a Police Department spokesman, said that the name of the woman would not be released because the incident remained under investigation. She has not been charged with reporting a false incident, Detective Samuel said. "This recent investigation should allay the public's fears and concerns," said Marilyn Mode, the Police Department's Deputy Commissioner for Public Information. "This is a safe park that is well patrolled, and people should continue to enjoy it."