

# THE BLADE



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## **Woman posts \$10,000 bond over kidnap, rape story**

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A 40-year-old Oregon woman was arraigneded this morning on a charge of making a false alarm, a felony, for telling authorities she had been kidnapped and raped. She was released this afternoon after posting \$10,000 bond.

Rochelle Bell, 40, of 3440 Fieldbrooke Lane, was arraigned in Toledo Municipal Court this morning and ordered held in the Lucas County Jail in lieu of \$10,000 bond.

Ms. Bell, who last week said she was raped after being abducted from the Westfield Franklin Park parking lot fabricated the whole story of the kidnap and sexual assault, Sgt. George Kral said.

A family friend told police last night that Ms. Bell's story was a lie.

"We had someone come forward and give us information that she asked a family friend to beat her up and cause these injuries," which she claimed she received as a result of the assault, Sergeant Kral said.

She was treated at St. Vincent Mercy Medical Center for bruises, cuts, and scrapes.

Ms. Bell, during a lengthy interview with detectives yesterday, changed her initial story and said she was not kidnapped from the mall but from somewhere on I-475, Sergeant Kral said.

She told investigators she was almost in an accident last Thursday night because of the inclement weather and pulled over to check her vehicle. She said a man pulled over, asked her if she was OK, then kidnapped her, the sergeant said.

The details of the assault - that the man drove her to an unknown location, physically and sexually assaulted her in his van, and returned her to her vehicle about 30 minutes later - were the same as her initial report to police, Sergeant Kral said.

But in the new story, she said she drove to the mall afterward and called 911.

The description of the suspect, a white male with a ski mask who drove a large, dark blue or black-panel van with back windows, also did not change.

However, some elements of her accounts did not add up, such as mall surveillance videos that did not show she was present when she claimed she was there, Sergeant Kral said.

And as she changed her story, detectives initially weren't suspicious because she claimed the suspect told her to lie about how it happened.

"She was still sticking by her guns that the sexual assault happened," the sergeant said.

Ms. Bell gave no reasons for making up the story, the sergeant said.

"Myself and two detectives were really working on this full time and had to shelve other cases they were investigating and it turned out to be false allegation," he said.

Sergeant Kral said he has received "no less than 30" phone calls from people saying they were going to avoid the mall or go with family or friends after hearing about the incident.

"There's not some masked assailant out [at the mall] kidnapping and raping people," the sergeant said earlier yesterday after Ms. Bell changed her story.

And that was good news for shoppers and employees.

"That is a relief," said Jackie Schlachter, of West Toledo, who decided not to go there at night unless she was with other people after hearing of the incident.

She said she knows mall employees, and they have been walking out in groups since news of the kidnapping.

"They are pretty freaked out about it. It kind of gave everyone a scare," Ms. Schlachter said.

Joan Berger said she felt better knowing the kidnapping didn't occur in the mall lot. Her 18-year-old daughter will be coming home from college soon, and "I'm sure she'll head this way," the Curtice woman said while at the mall.

Mrs. Berger's husband, Jeff, said the news isn't just important to shoppers.

"It's good news for the mall," he said.

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