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## Girl fabricated rape story with murder suspect, sheriff says

Melissa Boughton

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Sherrod Deon Palmer in 2016 (left) and 2013. Palmer is believed to have shorter hair now, possibly with red dye around his temples.

A girl has been charged with filing a false police report after authorities say she fabricated a story about being raped in Huger by a wanted murder suspect.

Berkeley County sheriff's Maj. David Brabham said Wednesday night that the girl, whose age was not released, took her father's car earlier that morning to meet up with some friends and go joyriding. On their way back, they decided to make up the story about her being raped and, knowing that Sherrod Deon Palmer was wanted, described him "to a tee," he said.

Palmer, 23, whose last known address was on S.C. Highway 41 in Huger, is still wanted in connection with the murder of Kadeem Johnson. Earlier in the day, authorities named him as a suspect in the reported sexual assault.

The girl was taken to Medical University Hospital for evaluation, accompanied by her father. Forensics investigators were called to process the vehicle. A K-9 unit was called in but was unable to pick up a suspect scent.

Brabham said evidence showed the girl was not raped. More charges could be filed in the case against the men, all over the age of 18, who were with the girl when she fabricated the story, he said.

Investigators believe Palmer was one of five men who forced their way inside a mobile home at the end of Martha Lane in the Francis Marion National Forest around 2:30 a.m. July 21, fatally shot Johnson, who lived there, and wounded a woman inside. The Sheriff's Office called it a targeted hit and not a random crime.

Three men were arrested after a manhunt on charges including murder: Kenneth Campbell Jr., 26, of St. Stephen; Jacob Malachi Mouzon, 18, of Bonneau; and Drake Edward Campbell, 19, of St. Stephen.

A fifth suspect also remains at large. Deputies were working to confirm his identity, the Sheriff's Office said earlier this week.

Guy Powell, who lives in Huger near where authorities had been searching Wednesday for Palmer, said he wasn't scared about the men on the lam.

"We're armed and dangerous," he said about the people who live in the rural communities. "We're all carrying at all times."

He added that it was rare for crimes other than thefts to occur in the area.

“We usually see 10 cars come down the road in a day, and usually know all 10 people,” Powell added. “And we watch out for each other; we know who is supposed to be here and who isn’t.”

Dave Munday contributed to this report. Reach Melissa Boughton at 843-937-5594 or at [Twitter.com/mboughtonPC](https://twitter.com/mboughtonPC).

[https://www.postandcourier.com/archives/girl-fabricated-rape-story-with-murder-suspect-sheriff-says/article\\_1e95d508-8c3b-52ab-9aa3-76f052aa7494.html](https://www.postandcourier.com/archives/girl-fabricated-rape-story-with-murder-suspect-sheriff-says/article_1e95d508-8c3b-52ab-9aa3-76f052aa7494.html)