Beat: Miscellaneous

Boy, 17, arrested in rape, murder of 6-year-old Washington state girl

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USPA News - A 17-year-old boy in Washington state was arrested and charged Saturday in connection with the rape and murder of a 6-year-old girl, local authorities said, nearly a week after Jenise Wright was abducted from the mobile home park where she and the suspect both lived. The 17-year-old boy, whose name was not released, was arrested at approximately 2:50 p.m. on Saturday at his residence in the Steele Creek Mobile Home Park in East Bremerton.

He was interviewed by detectives before being booked into the Kitsap County Juvenile Detention Center on charges of Murder in the Second Degree, Manslaughter in the First Degree, and Rape of a Child in the First Degree. "The Washington State Patrol Crime Lab made positive confirmation of a suspect through forensic evidence that had been collected," said Detective Lt. Earl Smith of the Kitsap County Sheriff`s Office. "This investigation is far from over. We have a lot still to do. Detectives from the Kitsap County Sheriff`s Office and agents with the FBI will continue with this investigation. We`ll continue with interviews, we`ll continue conducting searches, and we`ll continue collecting evidence." Jenise Wright, 6, was last seen around bedtime on August 2 and was gone the next morning, but her parents were not immediately concerned because the girl was allowed to wander around the park. When the girl failed to return home on the evening of August 3, the parents called 911. The girl`s body was found Thursday in an area near the mobile home park. "Yesterday, we made a promise to 6-year-old Jenise Paulette Wright that we would find justice for her. Today, we have fulfilled that promise," Smith said during Saturday`s press conference. In the days since the disappearance of Jenise, much of the attention turned to the girl`s father when it was revealed that he was charged with molesting two girls, ages 8 and 15, more than a decade ago. James Wright later pled guilty to a misdemeanor assault charge, but it is not clear why the molestation charges had been dropped. Sheriff`s Office spokesman Deputy Scott Wilson said the 17-year-old arrested on Saturday lived with his parents and was a resident of the park. He said the suspect was identified through "forensic data gathering" but could not say with certainty whether he was among those who had voluntarily complied with requests for DNA samples. Authorities had said on Friday that every person in the 103-unit community had complied with their DNA requests at that point.

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483 Green Lanes
UK, London N13NV 4BS
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