

Teen who told about rape was lying, investigators say

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OCALA — A 17-year-old girl who gave an elaborate story of being kidnapped and raped in an Anthony neighborhood was lying, investigators said Thursday.

Almost three weeks after she reported being raped by a man in a blue car, the girl's story fell apart, said Detective Bill Sowder, Marion County Sheriff's Office investigator.

The girl gave a very detailed story about the attack, which included the particular brand of cigarettes her attacker smoked.

Her description of the man was so good that officers were able to get a composite sketch done.

The report spurred an investigation which tied up deputies and investigators for more than 40 hours, said Sgt. Brad Smith, sheriff's spokesman.

It all began because she was late getting home.

After admitting the story was phony, Sowder arrested her for making a false report Thursday.

Because she is a minor charged with a misdemeanor and has no previous criminal record, her name is not being released by authorities.

Thursday evening, residents were relieved to hear there is not a rapist roaming the Anthony/Citra

area.

"I was really scared, and I have two friends that are single and it really did shake us up. We just made sure that our windows were locked and our doors were locked. It makes me feel a whole lot better that it wasn't true," said Abbie May.

May lives near the area in Citra where the girl said she was forced into the car.

"I live about two miles east of where it happened. I was always cautious," said Louise Mathis, who lives in Anthony where the girl said she was raped and then let go.

The real story came together after detectives started following up on leads. The composite sketch brought several calls from the public, who gave investigators names of people who matched the

PLEASE SEE TEEN ON 4A

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CONTINUED FROM 1A

description. One of those was a man who Sowder interviewed. Sowder said he did not consider the man a suspect, because he didn't match certain details of the description, but questioned him anyway. At the end of the interview, a woman in the home told Sowder that she saw the girl get into a car that night with four men. She gave Sowder the names of the four men.

Sowder found the men and questioned them. They told him they knew the girl and picked her up on Oct. 3 and drove to a house in Citra where the girl had sex with one of them.

Later that night, they all drove to a convenience store in Citra. At the store, the man she'd had sex with met his ex-girlfriend and the pair

walked off together.

The girl was upset and saw another man she knew and asked him for a ride, reports state.

That man told detectives he was going on a date, but was trying to see if he could get the girl to meet him later if his first date didn't show up.

The man said he'd had sex with the girl two nights before and thought she would be willing that night.

He took her to a lake nearby, but all they did was talk and walk, reports state.

She asked him to drive her to an Anthony mobile-home park where another man lived.

He dropped her off at the park, but the girl could not find the right house. That's when she walked to a nearby convenience store and realized she was late getting home. It

was almost midnight.

The girl, who has a baby, had to be home at a certain time, Sowder said.

She then called her mother in Citra and told her that something bad had happened, he said.

Last Thursday, the girl told detectives she made up the whole story, but maintained the sex that night was not consensual, reports state.

She said she was kissing the man in the bedroom and had her shirt off, but she tried to stop when the man wanted to have sex. She said he convinced her and held her arms down.

Despite her claims, there was no evidence to show that the sex was anything but consensual, Sowder said.

The girl was booked into the Marion County Jail and then released to her mother.