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Four Men Rape Deaf Woman In Brooklyn

BYLINE: By SHAILA K. DEWAN**SECTION:** Section B; Column 1; Metropolitan Desk; Pg. 7**LENGTH:** 318 words

A 21-year-old Brooklyn woman, who is deaf and mute, was dragged to an empty apartment building in East New York on Wednesday afternoon and raped by four men, the police said yesterday.

The woman was heading for the subway at 3 p.m. -- a time when parents in the neighborhood were collecting their children from school -- when she was approached by one or two men, the police said. They forced her a short distance to a building that is being renovated at Blake Avenue and Pine Street.

There, they were joined by other men, for a total of four. She was raped by all four men, the police said. They did not use a weapon, and the woman was not injured otherwise, the police said.

Yesterday, there was no sign of disturbance in the empty brown brick building. The basement door was unlocked, but the front entrance was secure. Property records show that the building is owned by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, and neighbors said it had been empty for at least three years.

The basement was completely dark, even in daylight. In the tiny front yard was a broken street lamp with a twisted pole.

After the attacks, the four men fled, and the woman went to a person she could communicate with easily, the police said. That person, whose relationship to the woman was not explained, reported the assault, and the woman was taken to a hospital.

The suspects were described as four black men, one 5-foot-7, about 18 years old, and heavysset. A second was 6-foot-2 and 22 or 23 years old, wearing a blue denim jacket and black pants. The others were of unknown age. One was said to be wearing a white T-shirt and gray sweat pants, the other to have a mustache and beard and a white shirt.

Wanda McKnight, a homemaker who said she had lived on Pine Street for seven years, said there had been shootings nearby, but never a gang rape. "The neighborhood is not safe, not after this," she said.

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