



ORANGE COUNTY  
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

# NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SHERIFF-CORONER DON BARNES

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## **Assault occurs in Aliso Viejo, Sheriff's investigators request public's assistance**

**ALISO VIEJO, Calif. (August 29, 2021)** This morning, a woman reported a possible sexual assault that occurred near the area of Pacific Park Drive and Alicia Parkway in Aliso Viejo, near the area where two sexual assaults occurred close to Woodfield Park in 2020.

The victim, a woman in her 40s, reported this morning that the assault occurred last night at approximately 11 p.m. while she was walking alone in the area. She was approached from behind by a suspect who grabbed her and dragged her into bushes nearby the Aliso Creek Trail. The woman lost consciousness and when she awoke, the suspect was no longer there. Due to the circumstances, the victim was unable to provide a description of the suspect or what occurred after she was kidnapped and dragged into the bushes. She is fully cooperating with Investigators.

This morning, deputies conducted a thorough search of the area where the assault occurred. Special Victims Detail investigators are leading the investigation and will work with the Orange County Crime Lab to determine if suspect DNA can be collected. If DNA is collected, it will be analyzed to determine if it matches DNA from the 2020 incidents.

"It is vital that this individual is identified and doesn't have the opportunity to attack again," said Orange County Sheriff Don Barnes. "While our investigators continue their tireless attempts to identify this suspect, we implore the community to come forward if they have any information to share."

On January 20, 2020 a sexual assault occurred in the area of Woodfield Park in Aliso Viejo. A 22-year-old woman reported that while she was skateboarding, an unknown man attempted to talk to her then unexpectedly grabbed the victim, who fought and screamed during the incident.

The second incident occurred on Thursday, April 2, 2020 when deputies responded to Woodfield Park after a woman reported a man grabbed her from behind and forced her into the bushes off the hiking trail, just east of the baseball fields. The victim, a female in her 30s, fought back and screamed for help, and the suspect fled the area. The suspect was described as a man in his mid-30s, dark eyes, little-to-no hair, a muscular build, wearing a black shirt, black shorts and tennis shoes.

Working with the Orange County Crime Lab, suspect DNA was collected from both victims. The suspect DNA profiles from both incidents matched, but does not match DNA in existing law enforcement databases.

Following the 2020 incidents, the Sheriff's Department set up a task force to identify and arrest the suspect. A team of more than 100 Sheriff's Department personnel ran multiple operations in the area. In addition, investigators worked with local businesses on leads and launched a public information campaign that included social media, traditional media and text message alerts. Despite a concerted effort, the task force operations did not result in a suspect being identified.

If you have information or may be able to identify the suspect, contact the Special Victims Detail at 714-647-7419 or Dispatch at 714-647-7000. Anonymous information may be provided through Orange County Crime Stoppers at 1-855-TIP-OCCS.