Gresham police say woman fabricated rape report, may face criminal charges

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By Ian Larson, The Oregonian

Gresham Police chief Craig Junginger speaks to reporters Friday after a woman admitted to police she fabricated a report that she was raped at a shopping mall Monday afternoon.

The Gresham police chief said Friday that a woman who claimed she was raped this week at a busy shopping center had fabricated the incident.

Chief Craig Junginger, appearing at a news conference, said investigators don't know why Danielle Hayes made up the story. She reported being raped and robbed of her wedding ring by two men in a secluded area behind the Gresham Station shopping center Monday afternoon.

He said police had some initial doubts because the 35-year-old mother could not provide details such as the time and location of the alleged assault and even a vague description of the men.
Gresham police pulled surveillance video from the shopping center and interviewed Hayes several times. As they dug deeper, Hayes recanted parts of her story, Junginger said.

Police will meet with the Multnomah County district attorney next week to discuss whether Hayes should face charges for her report.

"Our officers followed up immediately, spending hours looking for a crime scene that doesn't exist, interviewing a victim that is not a victim and asking the public to help us identify fabricated suspects," Junginger said. "Clearly this is not a good use of our limited police resources."

The report stunned shoppers at Gresham Station, which occasionally is marred by graffiti but rarely sees serious crimes.

Meerta Meyer, property manager for the center, said the revelation both relieved and angered her. Like Junginger, Meyer said she hopes this false report won't dissuade rape victims from coming forward.

Hayes told police she went to Gresham Station after 1 p.m. Monday to go shopping. She parked her blue minivan on Sleret Avenue, on the west side of Borders bookstore, and ran errands, she said.

The center, which covers 300,000 square feet and houses about 50 stores and restaurants, draws hundreds of people every day. Bargain hunters have streamed into Borders this week to take advantage of its liquidation sale.

After completing her shopping, Hayes said she returned to her van. She claimed that two men grabbed her and dragged her to a secluded area behind the center. She said that one stood as a lookout while the other raped her and took her wedding ring and another ring before both men ran away.

About 5 p.m. Hayes flagged down a security guard, who called police. She gave detectives a few details and was taken to Legacy Mount Hood Medical Center for a rape exam.

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contributed to this report.