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Why girl was sent to child-rape suspect Adhahn

By Jennifer Sullivan
Seattle Times staff reporter

A Kansas woman said she let her daughter move to Pierce County with child-rape suspect Terapon Adhahn six years ago because she thought it was the best option for the then-rebellious 12-year-old girl.



STEVE RINGMAN / THE SEATTLE TIMES

The girl lived with Terapon Adhahn for four years.

The girl and her family met Adhahn when he moved to Texas in 2001 after he was laid off from Boeing's plant in Auburn. Adhahn and the girl moved to Tacoma a short time later and lived at two different Spanaway addresses.

According to charges filed earlier this week, Adhahn repeatedly raped the girl over the four years they lived together, at least once at gunpoint.

Charging papers say the girl went to live with Adhahn with her mother's blessing, because the woman was having difficulty with the girl's behavior.

The girl's mother said Adhahn, the cousin of a man she was dating at the time, offered to take the child off her hands.

"I never thought he'd do anything to hurt my daughter," said the woman. "I asked her all the time. She said nothing happened."

On Thursday, Pierce County prosecutors charged Adhahn, 42, with one count of first-degree rape, three counts of second-degree rape and three counts of child rape in connection with the repeated assaults on the woman's daughter. He also faces several rape charges and a kidnapping charge in connection with the abduction and sexual assault of an 11-year-old Tacoma girl in 2000.

Pierce County prosecutors said they plan to charge Adhahn Monday with one count of aggravated-first-degree murder in connection with the slaying of 12-year-old Zina Linnik, who was abducted from outside her Tacoma home on July 4 and whose body was found July 12 in eastern Pierce County. Prosecutors haven't said whether they intend to seek the death penalty.

The girl who lived with Adhahn for four years estimated that she was raped twice weekly for several years, charging documents state.

Court papers say the last time she was assaulted the girl refused, and Adhahn attacked her at gunpoint.

The girl, who is now 19, lives near her mother in Wichita, Kan., and works at a local airport. She couldn't be

reached Friday for comment.

The Seattle Times is not naming either woman to protect the 19-year-old's identity.

Jerry Hill, Adhahn's cousin and the ex-boyfriend of the girl's mother, said he knew Adhahn by his middle name, Dang, and described him as gregarious, kind and always willing to baby-sit.

Hill said he, his ex-girlfriend and her children moved from Wichita to Texas around the same time that Adhahn moved to Texas, where he has family. "He seemed real nice," said Hill, 41, a heating and air-conditioning repairman who lives in Granbury, Texas, a suburb of Fort Worth. "He spent a lot of time with them and took them bowling."

Adhahn quickly grew close to the then-12-year-old girl. Hill said he saw Adhahn and the girl snuggling and holding hands.

Pennsiri Bower, Adhahn's mother, remembers seeing the two kissing.

Bower said she didn't approve of her son becoming involved with the girl. But she said their involvement appeared to be consensual.

"It's better going away with him than staying behind and getting pregnant by a boy the same age," Bower said. "Now everything is coming down to this."

"I thought it was odd," Hill said. "I didn't know he was that type. I just thought he was lonely."

But Hill and his ex-girlfriend said they didn't know Adhahn had been convicted of sexually assaulting a 16-year-old relative in 1990.

Adhahn served 60 days in jail and underwent five years of sexual-deviation therapy in exchange for pleading guilty to the reduced charge of first-degree incest.

Hill and his ex-girlfriend say the girl went to live with Adhahn shortly after Hill broke up with the girl's mother.

"He [Adhahn] told me that 'I can help you out. I can see what you and your kids have been through,'" the mother said Friday.

The woman said that her daughter wanted to live with Adhahn. "He would come to our house almost seven days a week. He'd eat, talk and spend time with the family. We'd play poker and do the family thing," she said.

But at some point, the woman said, her daughter left and moved in with a friend in Pierce County because "she could not get along with him no more."

The daughter eventually moved back to Wichita.

Adhahn is being held in Pierce County Jail in lieu of just more than \$2 million in bail.

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