

A Woman Stole An Exchange Student's Hijab And Tried To Choke Her With It, Prosecutors Say

By KATIE SHEPHERD

A 24-year-old college student from Saudi Arabia was waiting for a train near the library in downtown Portland, Oregon, shortly after 7 p.m. on Nov. 12, when she felt a stranger grabbing her hijab from behind, tightening the fabric around her neck.

Jasmine Renee Campbell allegedly tried to choke the student, who is Muslim, with her hijab before the victim shoved the attacker away. Prosecutors said in a statement Campbell then ripped the woman's hijab from her head. A probable cause affidavit says Campbell removed all of her clothes except for a leather jacket, "started dancing," and rubbed the hijab against her "naked breasts" and "naked vagina." The affidavit also alleges Campbell mocked the victim's religion and made fun of her hijab.

The frightening encounter ended in an arrest after witnesses called the police, but left the Portland State University exchange student, who isn't being named by law enforcement officials, afraid to wear her religious garb in public. On Friday, prosecutors obtained an arrest warrant after 23-year-old Campbell failed to appear in court for her arraignment on five misdemeanor charges.

According to court records, Campbell told police officers who detained her that she wanted to show the victim that she "did not have to be a Muslim" and "religion doesn't define her." She also told police she



PHOTO: SYED KHANIL ULLAH

People of many faiths came to the April 28, Open Mosque Day at Islamic Center of Naperville, where among many activities was a chance to try on the hijab worn by many Muslim women.

was "fighting and playing around" and "wanted to be a stripper."

The victim told police she did not want the hijab back. After the attack, she stopped wearing the religious head covering in public, opting to cover her hair with a knit cap and a scarf instead because she doesn't want to draw attention to her faith, according to court documents.

Prosecutors charged Campbell with two bias crime charges, attempted strangulation, harassment and criminal mischief after a grand jury indictment last month.

Campbell did not answer the phone number listed on court documents late Sunday. She told KPTV she had been drinking too much on the night of the incident,

and said she missed her court date because she was seeking treatment for a mental health condition.

The anti-Muslim attack comes nearly three years after a man fatally stabbed two men and injured a third after they intervened as he shouted Islamophobic insults at a pair of black teenage girls riding on a light-rail train in Portland. Months later, another man was arrested in Portland for showering a Muslim couple with slurs as he followed them in his car for more than 20 blocks. Another Muslim woman wearing a hijab reported that a man got in her face, gave her the middle finger and spit at her in 2018, but Portland police refused to record the encounter as a crime.

National hate-crime statistics are spotty at best, as many experts agree that crimes motivated by bias go underreported and are sometimes incorrectly categorized by police for a variety of reasons. Despite the missing data, a recent report released by the FBI in November shows hate crimes hit a 16-year high in 2018. Although the FBI counted 188 bias-motivated attacks on Muslims in 2018, civil rights advocates at the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) counted 1,664 anti-Muslim bias incidents in 2018, more than six times the number the FBI documented.

Zakir Khan, board chair for CAIR's Oregon chapter, told The Washington Post that the Nov. 12 attack reflects increased hostility directed at Muslim women, who can be easily recognized if they choose to wear a hijab. He said as an exchange student, the victim is especially vulnerable because she may not be familiar with U.S. laws and norms.

Khan told The Post national rhetoric around Islam emboldens people to act on prejudices and the inaccurate stereotype that women who choose to wear hijabs are oppressed makes Muslim women more likely to be targeted.

"Women wear hijabs as a symbol of faith," he told the Portland Mercury. "Rather than people respecting that symbol, they are deciding to act out against them in violence. It's unacceptable."

-THE WASHINGTON POST

Gujarati Catholic Samaj Holds Christmas Celebrations In New Jersey

By STAFF WRITER

Gujaratis who follow the Catholic faith held a rousing Christmas celebration Dec. 28, 2019, at the Holy Savior Academy of Sacred Heart Church in South Plainfield, N.J.

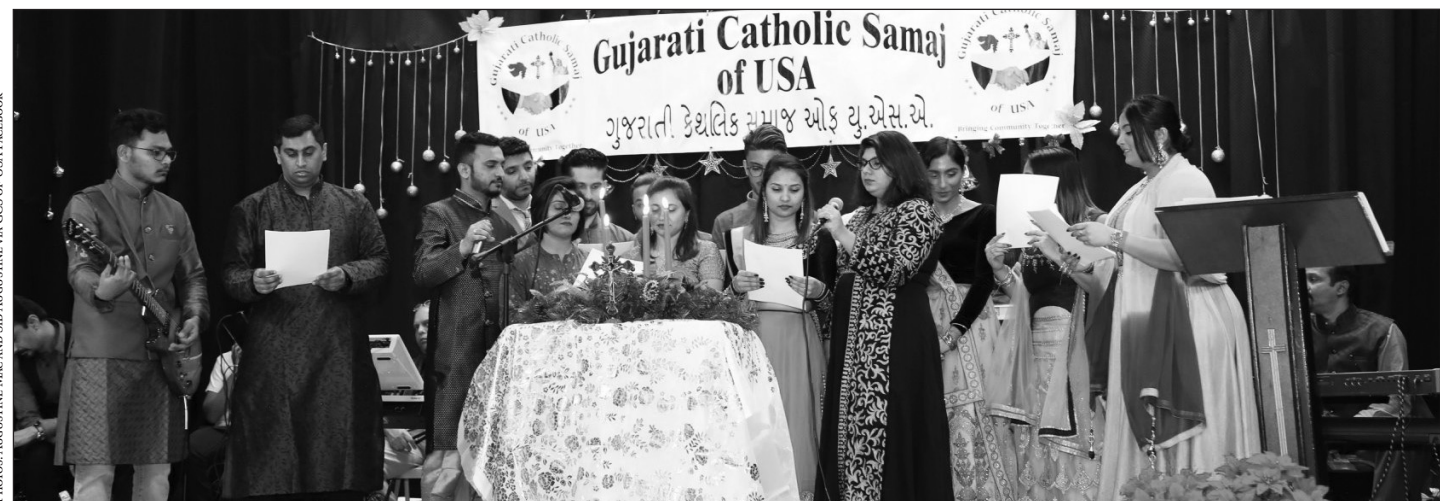
Scores of people attended the annual event which for the first time, was organized by the Youth Wing of Gujarati Catholic Samaj of USA, according to Irena, one of the youth organizers, who spoke to ITV Gold.

The event was "packed with performances" dinner time karaoke and Garba performances by several groups, and with the live band. The singer at the event was Prakash Parmar, who told ITV Gold, he had been performing at the Gujarati Catholic Samaj Christmas event for the last 3 years.

Gujarati Catholic Samaj of USA has been organizing the annual Christmas celebration since it's was formed in 2010.

"The festivity and tradition continues at the eve of our 10th anniversary with new, fresh, energetic youth leadership. We are so pleased and very much proud of our youth wing who has taken up the responsibilities to arrange and manage the whole event," the GCS of USA said on its website.

Among the guests present at the event was Father Andrew Nisari, Father John



PHOTOS: AUGUSTINE MAC AND SID AUGUSTINE VIA GCS OF USA FACEBOOK

Members of the Gujarati Catholic Samaj of USA celebrated Christmas Dec. 28, 2019, at the Holy Savior Academy of Sacred Heart Church, in South Plainfield, N.J.

Alvarado, as well as Sisters Chetna and Anjana.

Father Nisari noted how Gujarati Catholics from near and far had come to celebrate the birth of Jesus. He thanked the organizers and wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a New Year full of promise, in his interview with ITV Gold.

Father Alvarado evoked biblical scenes to make his point about the joyful occasion.

Sister Chetna, speaking to ITV Gold, gave her blessings to those present and

wished all a happy new year. Sister Anjana said it was her first time at the celebration, and that she was happy at being with her own community.

The mission and vision of the GCS of USA, a non-profit organization, is "to bring our community together to unite, preserve and propagate and grow the rich cultural heritage of Gujarati Catholics in the world," the website says. In the U.S. the organization strives to bring together Gujarati Catholics with a view to providing "a forum for social, religious, cultural, edu-

cational, economical and charitable interaction among its members, of this great, blessed and adopted country... The United States of America."

The GCS of USA organizes various programs, events, educational fundraising activities, and education developmental projects for the community, including social events, annual celebrations, entertainment, seminars on social awareness, religious awareness, and to stay connected to families, relatives and friends back home in Gujarat, the organization says.