

4 Md. teens charged with rape in Damascus HS locker room attack released on bond

WASHINGTON — All four teens [charged as adults](#) with rape in connection with an attack in a Montgomery County high school locker room described by prosecutors as “cruel and violent” have been released on bond.

Jean Claude “JC” Abedi, Kristian Jamal “KJ” Lee, Will Smith and Caleb Thorpe have all been charged with first-degree rape and conspiracy to commit rape. A fifth teen has been [charged as a juvenile](#) and has not been identified.

During the hearing, Assistant Montgomery County State’s Attorney Peter Feeney called the attack an “astonishingly cruel and violent rape.”

He said the four teens charged in the attack — all 15 years old — sought out the four freshman members of the junior varsity football team before practice Oct 31, held them down and assaulted them.

The teens, who were arrested last week and held in the Montgomery County jail, were ordered released on an unsecured \$20,000 bond following a court hearing Monday. Montgomery County District Court Judge John Moffett ordered the teens to stay away from Damascus High School, ordered them not to have any contact with each other and also imposed a curfew on the teens.

In a statement read in open court, the prosecutor laid out grim details of the assaults.

The victims said they were attacked separately inside the locker room.

One of the boys said he saw the older teens enter the freshman locker room chanting and "fist-pumping" a broom. Then the lights went out.

One of the victims heard the sound of a wooden broomstick banging against the wall.

All of the victim said they were held down, as the older teens pulled their pants down and assaulted them — or tried to assault them — with the broom stick. The older teens were laughing and saying "It's his turn to get it," and "It's time," prosecutors said.

All four of the victims are 14 years old.

Inside the courtroom, attorney Daniel Wright, who's representing JC Abedi, sought to cast blame on coaches and other adults at the school who, he said, should have been supervising team members.

"Peer pressure and group psychology take over and young people do things they wouldn't normally do," Wright said, adding, "This is a hazing incident that went to an extreme."

During a news conference Monday afternoon, Montgomery County State's Attorney John McCarthy rejected that characterization, saying the locker room attack rises above the level of "hazing."

"I am offended by the term hazing ... It's not hazing," McCarthy said. "These are crimes. I would caution anyone to refer to this as hazing. These boys were victims of criminal acts. They were not victims of hazing."

McCarthy said the law requires anyone over the age of 14 charged with first-degree rape to be charged as an adult.

The charge carries a maximum penalty of life in prison.

“We knew the consequences of the charge of first-degree rape,” McCarthy said. “We just wanted to take our time, to make sure that the charges truly were there based on the allegations.”

The four teens are entitled to what is known as a waiver hearing during which they can request a circuit court judge to kick the case back to juvenile court, where the teens were initially charged. McCarthy said he expects attorneys for all four of the teens charged as adults to file the waiver requests.

The reported assault has [shocked the community](#), parents say. Last week, the school system said it was instituting mandatory new training on hazing for students involved in extracurricular activities.

Monday’s hearing came after brooms were found around campus over the weekend in what principal Casey Crouse called an “[extremely upsetting](#)” act.

WTOP’s Megan Cloherty contributed to this report.

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