



## BREMERTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Bremerton Police Arrest Level 3 Sex Offender Following Attempted Assault in Park**

A 30 year old registered Level 3 Sex Offender was arrested within minutes following an assault of two young women in the area of Stephenson Canyon Park Friday night. The suspect has been jailed and will make a first appearance today.

Two women, ages 21 and 22 and both from Bremerton, were walking their dogs on the trails in the park in East Bremerton. At 5:20 PM they were approached by a man who made a few comments and then grabbed one of the woman's breasts and then took her cell phone from her pocket, saying, "this is my phone." The man then grabbed the other woman's breasts, as she was trying to call 911 on her cell phone. As he tried to get that phone, she threw it to the other woman as the suspect threw her to the ground and attempted to strangle her.

The woman was able to fight him off and the man left toward the south through the wooded area. Officers were immediately dispatched and were provided a description. Officers located and arrested the suspect as he was trying to leave the park. The arresting officer reported that the man was sweating profusely and was shaking uncontrollably when he was placed into handcuffs. The victims positively identified the man, and a statement was taken.

The man was identified as 30 year old Vern Hess. He is a registered Level 3 Sex Offender who was convicted of two sex offenses in Pierce County in 2013, according to public records. Hess was jailed on \$500,000 bail and a probable cause statement was completed for review for charges of Robbery in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree and Assault in the 4<sup>th</sup> Degree with Sexual Motivation.

"While our officers did a great job flooding the area and getting this suspect into custody immediately, I am truly disturbed by the facts that led up to this incident," said Bremerton police Chief Steve Strachan, adding "this man committed two similar crimes in Pierce County, served only a few years, and was then placed in our city to apparently commit the same type of crime again." Information on Hess' background is available on the public Sex Offender database.

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