



Warren C. Evans
Sheriff

News Release

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Release Date: November 8, 2007
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Sheriff seeks public's help finding armed robber

◆ *DNA from ski mask left at scene reveals identity of suspect, a habitual offender*

Armed with DNA evidence recovered from a makeshift ski mask left at the scene of a home invasion and armed robbery in Highland Park early this year, Wayne County Sheriff's Deputies have learned the suspect's identity and are asking for the public's assistance in locating him, Sheriff Warren C. Evans said today.



On January 2, 2007, two men wearing home made masks entered a home in the 14000 block of Third Avenue, forced the female homeowner and her 13-year-old son to the floor at gunpoint and stole several items of jewelry, along with more than \$200 in cash.

Around the time of the incident, sheriff's deputies had responded to the location after receiving a tip from a neighbor about some suspicious activity. Deputies knocked on the door and received no response. As they canvassed the area, they witnessed two men running from the back of the house. One suspect, Hakeem Singleton, was arrested after a short foot chase and was found to be in possession of several of the items taken from the home, including a designer watch and eyeglasses.

The second suspect got away at the time, but he threw away his ski mask, which was made from a navy blue T-Shirt by cutting eye holes in the sleeve, as he fled the scene, Evans said. Through DNA analysis, investigators have been able to positively identify the suspect as 31-year-old Leroy Phillip-Corya Townsend (aka, James Hicks), who served time in prison for a 1996 conviction of assault with a dangerous weapon, assault to commit great bodily harm less than murder, felony firearms and malicious destruction of property. Townsend was discharged from state oversight in October 2006. (View his prison record at: <http://www.state.mi.us/mdoc/asp/otis2profile.asp?mdocNumber=252037>)

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Evans said that Townsend represents a threat to public safety and is calling on citizens to provide any information that may help bring him into custody.

“We have been following tips and leads for the past several months since the DNA match was made, but we’re at a dead end,” Evans said. “We are hoping someone has seen Mr. Townsend and can help us find him. It’s pretty safe to say that based on his history, he may be victimizing others.”

Anyone with information is asked to call Crime Stoppers at 1-800-SPEAK UP.

Townsend’s partner, Singleton, was convicted of 1st-degree home invasion, armed robbery and felony firearms. He is currently serving a maximum 20 year prison sentence.