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Metro

BU students put on alert after attack

Man grabs victim then flees in SUV

By **Matt Rocheleau** | GLOBE STAFF FEBRUARY 05, 2014

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Police are stepping up patrols and asking Boston University students and other residents to be vigilant after a female student said she was grabbed and struck in the face by a man wearing a ski mask during what was apparently an attempted robbery Sunday night.

The man came up from behind the woman while she was walking alone at about 10 p.m. Sunday on Amory Street in Brookline near BU's campus, according to the university's news website BU Today and the Brookline Police Department's blog.

The attacker "grabbed her in a bear hug," authorities said.

When she screamed, the man hit her on the left side of her face, officials said. The commotion attracted the attention of dog walkers in Knyvet Park, prompting the assailant to free the woman and run away.

A light-colored Honda Pilot sport utility vehicle with a dent on the driver's side that the man was in just before the attack then drove past the student and parked around the corner on Thatcher Street, officials said. The assailant ran to the vehicle and got into the front passenger seat.

The suspect did not appear to be armed, authorities said. Nothing was stolen during the attack.

The man was described as about 5 feet 8 inches tall with a medium build. He was wearing baggy blue jeans, a black hooded sweatshirt with the hood up, and gloves, officials said.

Authorities investigating the case asked anyone with information to contact Brookline Police at 617-730-2222 or BU Police at 617-353-2121.

The attack occurred in an area where students and others have been the victims of street crime in the recent past.

A string of robberies was reported there in fall 2012 and in spring 2013. Among other items, victims lost cash, cellphones, and laptops. Suspects were arrested and charged in connection with most of those incidents.

After the latest episode, campus police advised students to be aware of their surroundings, not wear headphones or talk or text on a cellphone at night, avoid walking alone, avoid poorly lit areas, and at the first sign of trouble dial 911.

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