

Malmstrom airman charged with sexual assault

By Peter Johnson - Great Falls (Mont.) Tribune

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A Malmstrom Air Force Base airman was arrested Thursday night on charges that he kidnapped and sexually assaulted a female real estate agent earlier that day after getting a tour of a home being sold on Upper River Road.

Word of the crime shocked the business community, with real estate brokers alerting female agents by phone and issuing a mass email warning Thursday night before the arrest, said Jim Dea, president of the Great Falls Association of Realtors.

Airman 1st Class Bradley J. Crisman, 21, assigned to the 341st Missile Security Forces Squadron, was charged with aggravated kidnapping, sexual intercourse without consent, assault with a weapon, tampering with a witness and two counts of tampering with evidence.

According to court documents, a man called the real estate broker, whose name was not released because of the nature of the offense, and arranged to meet at mid-afternoon Thursday on Upper River Road for a tour of a home.

The agent told investigators she showed the man the home without incident. According to court documents, as the agent and Crisman left the home, he grabbed her from behind, put a knife to her neck and forced her to the ground. He then allegedly bound her hands behind her back with zip ties and took her to a downstairs bedroom in the home. Court documents state that Crisman then taped the agent's mouth, stripped off her clothes and used a finger to commit a sexual act, court documents state. At that point, Crisman reportedly asked the real estate agent when the homeowners were expected to return, according to investigators. When she said within 20 minutes, he freed her and threatened to kill her if she reported the incident, court documents state. Crisman attempted to erase his messages on the agent's cell phone, but was not successful. Sheriff's deputies were able to track Crisman with the help of the FBI and Malmstrom security officers, court documents state.

The court documents said Crisman waived his rights during an interview with sheriff's officers and admitted placing zip ties on the female real estate agent's wrists, taking her to the basement and removing her pants and underwear. He also told investigators that he inappropriately touched the agent. The deputy's report states that the real estate agent's wrists were bound so tightly that she still had marks from the restraints five hours after the alleged attack.

More than 60 Realtors, title company officials and lenders lined the courtroom as Crisman made his initial appearance via a video Friday afternoon from the county detention center before Judge Pro-tem Maggie Griffith.

Clad in an orange jumpsuit, Crisman answered, "Yes, ma'am," repeatedly as Griffith explained his rights and the possible penalties of up to 100 years imprisonment for kidnapping and sexual assault charges.

County Attorney John Parker successfully argued that Crisman's bond be set at \$200,000.

Parker said Crisman is charged with "an unprovoked, premeditated sexual assault on a totally innocent woman," and that his attempt to tamper with evidence was "evidence of his criminality." Parker also said Crisman's alleged threat to kill the victim "demonstrates that he poses an extreme threat to the community."

Betty Carlson, Crisman's temporary defense attorney, asked for a \$50,000 bond, saying he had lived in the community 18 months, is married and has no previous felonies.

Griffith said she set bond at the higher amount based on the severity of the charges and how long the defendant has lived in Great Falls.