

# Irving rape suspect led double life, lawyers say

## Sera, 39, is accused of drugging 3 women with Rohypnol

FORT WORTH (AP) — A man accused of drugging three women, then and videotaping the acts is scheduled to appear in court for a hearing on motions.

Attorneys for Steven Sera, 39, are expected to fight Arkansas prosecutors' motions, but those to reveal his criminal record and to inform the jury with evidence tried to leave the man. He will be arraigned before Circuit Judge Sam Pope.

Sera, who sits in an Arkansas jail in lieu of a \$150,000 bond, faces rape charges in Arkansas.

Investigators say Sera, a four-month period, women in Texas, Missouri and Fort Worth suburb of Irving. He is accused of drugging each victim with the so-called "rape drug" that left victims unconscious.

What sets apart this investigation, say, is that Sera videotaped his acts each time.

Sera was a heinous man, it covers three months, involves a fairly young man," said Short, a prosecutor in Fort Worth, Ark., where one

of the rapes was reported. "And it has to do with sex and drugs."

No one had filed a complaint against Sera before his estranged wife, Nancy Sera, found a videotape of some of the alleged incidents at their Irving home. That chance discovery, police say, led to Sera's arrest.

Indeed, the women were unaware of the attacks until the videotape was discovered, police said.

Sera's Warren attorney, Clint Huey, could not be reached for comment Sunday by The Associated Press. His Fort Worth attorney, Don Gandy, referred comment to attorney John Hall of Little Rock, Ark., who did not return a telephone call Sunday.

Colleyville police arrested Sera at his Irving home June 26, a few days after Mrs. Sera found the videotape. Almost an hour long, it shows Sera committing sexual acts on unconscious, naked women, prosecutors said.

He is charged with raping a 32-year-old Colleyville woman last December in her home.

Freed on \$150,000

bond, he was arrested again July 12 at a Dallas-area travel agency after he scheduled a trip to Mexico with another woman, police said.

In Warren, Sera was charged with kidnapping, drugging and raping a 26-year-old woman last November. Sera also has been charged with the attempted rape of another Warren woman.

In Missouri, he is charged with a sexual assault count and three counts of deviant sexual assault against a 20-year-old Springfield, Mo., woman last September.

If convicted, Sera could face up to life in prison in Arkansas, up to 20 years in Texas and up to seven years in Missouri. He could be sentenced to an additional 20 years under federal legislation applying to use of an illegal drug as a tool of rape or other violent crime President Clinton signed into law last year.

Married to Sera for eight years, Mrs. Sera had been pregnant with their second child when he was arrested. They married af-

ter a quick engagement, even though she knew little about his past.

"I was not aware of his first marriage or that he had a daughter until his family told me six months after we were married," she told the Fort Worth Star-Telegram.

In 1990, Sera was arrested on suspicion of felony grand theft in Richmond, Calif., but that was reduced to a misdemeanor charge of odometer rollback, according to court records.

Nancy Sera said after she and Steven married, they moved repeatedly because he couldn't hold a job.

"He's been fired from about every job," Mrs. Sera said. "I don't know why, but he would have lots of excuses."

Finally, they settled in Irving, where they lived for four years.

Despite his spotty employment record, Steven Sera opened Chandler Lumber in the Dallas suburb of Farmers Branch in March 1995 with financial help from an Arkansas businessman. Sera eventually bought out his partner.

Sera's Arkansas partner later took control of the Warren yard, which continues operating.

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|                                  |            |
|----------------------------------|------------|
| CONTACT (PG)                     | 7:00 9:50  |
| WISHMASTER (R)                   | 7:25 10:00 |
| MY BEST FRIEND'S WEDDING (PG-13) | 7:10 9:50  |
| CONSPIRACY THEORY (R)            | 7:00 9:40  |
| LEAVE IT TO BEAVER (PG)          | 7:20       |
| NOTHING TO LOSE (R)              | 10:00      |
| HERCULES (G)                     | 7:30       |
| EVENT HORIZON (R)                | 9:45       |

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# Houston mayoral race nears end

## Candidates push to finish last-second campaigns, recruit voters

FORT WORTH (AP) — As the Houston mayoral campaign winds to a close, candidates are still trying to recruit voters. Mostly, however, they are trying to make sure the converted voters will vote.

"You're down to the final three or four days, it boils down to a question of just turning out your base," said Chris Turner, campaign manager for candidate George Saenz. "The persuasion of the campaign is pretty over."

Those sentiments were echoed by Payne, press secretary for Brown, the mayoral front runner who spent Sunday morning at different church services.

Most of the main work has been done up to this point," Payne said.

Campaign workers for the leading candidates spent the week knocking on doors, passing out campaign literature and making calls to get their supporters voting booths.

"It's a full-scale effort to try to squeeze as many more votes as we can," Howard Opinsky, spokesman for Rob Mosbacher, said.

Candidates attended rallies, church services and candidate forums, among other public

events.

"I'm out with the people making sure that my message gets out there," Brown said before a Sunday candidate forum in the Houston suburb of Clear Lake.

Several candidates who turned out for the Clear Lake forum discussed a Houston Chronicle/KHOU-TV poll published Sunday that showed about 18 percent of 831 voters polled still undecided about the mayor's race.

Brown said he was not surprised by the poll, which showed that he and Mosbacher were the clear leaders among voters — Brown with 30 percent and Mosbacher with 26.9 percent. George Greanias, who was third in the poll with 14.6 percent, said since it was conducted in late September and early October, it

didn't take into account increased television ad campaigns and two mayoral debates.

He said his campaign would be trying to persuade both undecided Houstonians and "soft" supporters of other candidates.

"You want to persuade them they've made a terrible mistake and change their minds," he said.

The poll, based on voting and population patterns, assumed voter turnout would be 64 percent white, 25 percent black and 8 percent Hispanic.

Turner said that underestimates the Hispanic vote, which makes up a good portion of those who back Saenz. Only 4.8 percent of those polled said they would vote for Saenz.

Turner said there will be a larger turnout since Hispanics are being targeted in the campaign against a proposition to abolish the city's affirmative action program. Some local races also feature Hispanic candidates.

"There are a number of things working out there which I think are going to create a higher turnout within the Hispanic community than historically has been the case," he said.

**"You want to persuade them they've made a terrible mistake and change their minds."**

**LEE BROWN**  
HOUSTON MAYORAL CANDIDATE

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