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Catalunya (Catalonia)

Paisos Catalans (Catalan Nations)

'Vampire' on the prowl

A snarling 'vampire' repeatedly tried to bite the neck of his victim during a sinister attack in Bishop's Stortford.

Like a scene from a horror movie, the assailant - dubbed Dracula by neighbours - leaped out of the darkness.

His victim, a 43-year-old man, was attacked as he put out rubbish at his home in Sandle Road, Hockerill, last Wednesday at 9.50pm.

The fiend grabbed him and tried to bite his neck. The pair wrestled for some time before the victim managed to fight him off.

He called police and later alerted neighbours to the bizarre incident.

"They're nicknaming the attacker Dracula," said one, who had heard that three women had been set upon in the Hockerill area. "He gropes them and bites their necks."

Another said of the attack: "The guy jumped out of nowhere, hissing and snarling, and attempted to bite his neck several times."

"The victim felt the guy was acting out a Dracula character."

"The next evening the victim posted notes through doors explaining what had happened."

"He said he didn't want to cause any worry but did want to tell people so we could be vigilant."

"I've heard rumours that there have been other attacks - several on men and one on a woman."

Sandle Road is a quiet, private street. "We've only got one street light so it's quite dark here at night," said the female neighbour.

"I've always felt quite safe because you can hear any noise on the gravel road surface. This has made me more vigilant."

"I make sure my windows are closed and I've started carrying a panic alarm now."

She thought the attacker might be on drugs or have mental health issues.

Another resident said: "It's freaky - you don't expect it to happen on your doorstep."

The attacker was about 6ft (1.83m) tall and wore a beige combat jacket, jeans and trainers.

One woman believes she may have spotted him earlier in the day.

Herts police are investigating. A spokesman said: "We have only been told about this one assault. We are not linking it to anything else."

Witnesses or anyone with information can contact police on 0845 3300 222 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555111.

Elizabeth Reeve
Herts and Essex Observer, 21 Dec.

Mother of alleged vampire recruit back in classroom

School district had requested LaTanya Wiggins undergo a psychological exam

Fremont Elementary teacher LaTanya Wiggins — who was pulled from the classroom in November pending the outcome of a psychological exam — has been reassigned.

She will begin a new teaching assignment at Jeffries Elementary School on Wednesday. The school district requested that she be examined after she started talking about problems at home.

Wiggins told the News-Leader she thought her co-workers misinterpreted the trouble she was having with a teenage daughter, who became involved with a group of youths who claim they are vampires. The youths reportedly tried to convince Wiggins' daughter that she was a vampire, too.

The educator said she had to separate her daughter from her new crowd and get the girl into counseling.

Wiggins said she complied with the school district's request and participated in 10 hours of psychological testing conducted by an examiner selected by the district.

She provided to the News-Leader a four-page report written by psychologist Betsy Kassab that reviewed key events and relationships in Wiggins' life history, the various tests she took and how she performed on them.

"She presented with normal thought processing with no signs of cognitive delay or the presence of psychosis. When asked if she believed in vampires, she replied 'absolutely not,'" Kassab wrote. "This psychological evaluation formulated no evidence of her being psychotic, no evidence of a social or emotional disorder, and no evidence of having a mental illness. This woman is an intellectually talented person who did not disclose any information which could be used as criticism against her. She shows no signs of being a danger to herself or others."

Kassab's report said there was no reason to recommend therapy, and further stated an adjustment problem Wiggins is experiencing will likely be "self-resolving when her situation with her employer becomes settled."

Relieved by the results, Wiggins told the News-Leader she prefers not to return to Fremont Elementary, where she thought she was treated meanly and unfairly.

District spokesman Bob Keyes confirmed that Wiggins will begin a new teaching assignment at Jeffries.

Wiggins said she's excited by the new assignment because it will allow her to specialize in teaching science — an area she loves — to fifth-graders. At Fremont, she had been a first-grade teacher.

She allowed the News-Leader to see the personal report because she wants parents at Jeffries to know she is really OK, she said.

Cory de Vera

www.news-leader.com, 30 Dec.