

Woman's Prayers Ward Off Assault Attempt by Habitual Criminal

Faced with the possibility of sexual assault, a woman in the University of South Florida area in Tampa began praying and reciting John 3:16 when a man invaded her apartment last weekend. Considering what the man had done earlier—and his arrest record—her prayers could have saved her life.

Charlie Bates, who according to the *Tampa Bay Times* had committed multiple sexual assaults late Thursday night prior to entering the woman's apartment, forced the woman inside and made her undress. After the woman began praying, police said Bates apologized for his actions and allowed her to dress.

After praying together, police said the woman attempted to hand Bates a Bible, but he refused. After she ripped some pages out and gave them to him, he left and she immediately called 911.

The crime spree ended in disaster for the 24-year-old Bates, who was killed during a firefight with authorities on Friday in east Hillsborough County. The firefight capped off a large manhunt for Bates, who had reportedly stolen a friend's car. During the crime spree, Bates reportedly told his victims that he had killed and threatened their lives as well.

Prior to the incident in the woman's apartment, four other women weren't so fortunate. The *Times* reports that police said Bates raped the women at Cambridge Woods Apartments after binding four men in what was a gathering of USF students to watch football.

Later that night, the *Times* said Bates happened upon a party and forced 25 people into a bedroom at gunpoint. He fired a

shot into the carpet before leaving, but apparently no one was hurt.

While investigating the incident at Cambridge Woods Apartments, police reportedly heard gunshots and caught a glimpse of Bates. With fingerprints from the rape scene, police were able to issue a warrant for Bates' arrest by morning.

After receiving a tip about the stolen car, police noticed the burnt orange sedan and began to follow it. That set off a chase that reached between 80 to 100 mph and saw Bates fire at officers from the driver's side window.

Police were able to catch up to Bates and slammed into the vehicle just north of Interstate 4. A shootout then resulted in Bates' death.

Bates was believed to be involved in other incidents earlier in the week, including robbing people at gunpoint, assault and sexual assault. He had previously been arrested on a domestic battery charge in 2009, a concealed weapons charge and marijuana possession and drug paraphernalia charges in Lakeland, Fla., earlier this year.