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A GANG of suspected hijackers, who allegedly raped a Pretoria attorney and sexually assaulted her sister for over four hours, were arrested hours after the attack as they left the funeral of an apparent accomplice.

The three Soweto men were caught on Saturday as they drove out of Lotus Gardens Cemetery by Pretoria Flying Squad and K9 Unit members who had been lying in wait for them.

Police had tracked them down after tracing the sister's rental car's tracking signal.

The three, one of whom was seriously injured when he tried to resist arrest and shoot at police, are alleged to have attacked the two sisters outside Club Mint in Joburg in the early hours of Saturday morning.

The two, aged 21 and 24, who had been spending the night with their relative, had gone to the nightclub's car park to get something from their Audi A3 when they were attacked at gunpoint, pushed into the car and driven off.

The relative, unaware of what had happened, became worried when the sisters did not return.

Unable to reach either of them on their cellphones, she contacted her boyfriend, a police reservist.

He immediately alerted police colleagues and informants, and a frantic search was launched.

The relative said that when the sisters did not come back, she was beside herself with worry.

"I did not know what had happened. I went outside but I could not see the car. I became frantic and did not know where to begin to look for them," she said.

Unbeknown to her, her phone call to the sisters is believed to have sparked the rage of one of the hijackers.

"I discovered that up until then my relatives had managed to convince their attackers that they did not have any cellphones or cash with them, but when one of them heard the phone ring and saw it, he flew into a rage," she said.

Recalling the sisters' description of the attack, the relative said the hijackers stopped the car and covered the sisters' faces before shoving one of them into the boot.

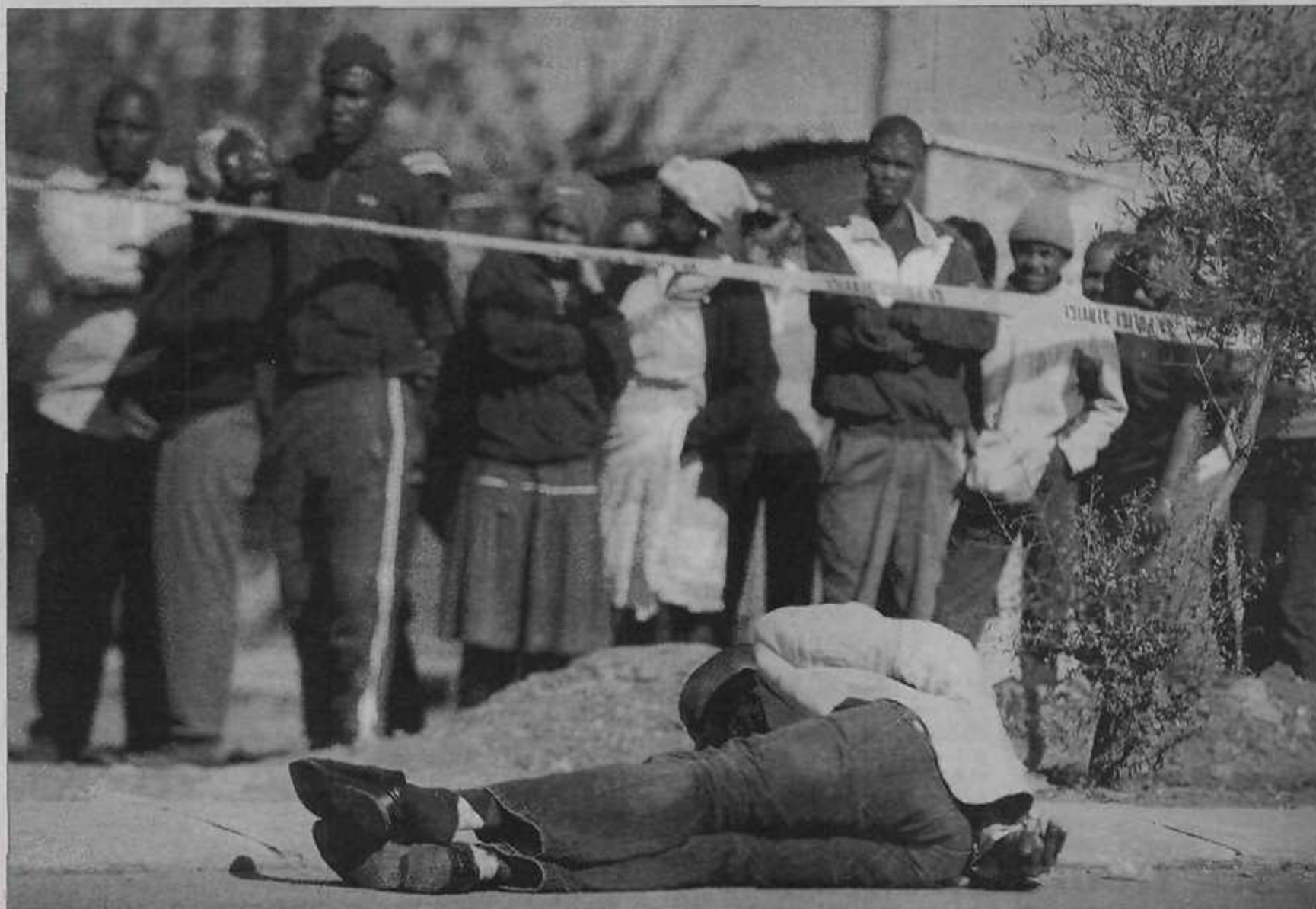
"The man continued demanding cellphones and money. He screamed repeatedly at them, pushed one of them into the boot before he attacked the other, repeatedly raping her at gunpoint.

"The rape apparently went on for ages. Her sister could hear everything from inside the boot.

"It was terrible. He was brutal. He carried on and on. He just would not stop," said the relative.

The sisters, one of whom is a beautician in Durban, were visiting their relative for the weekend.

"We just wanted a fun weekend. We had not seen each other for a



One of the three men who was arrested by the Pretoria K9 unit and the Flying Squad on Saturday shortly after attending a funeral in Pretoria West.

PICTURES: SIZE NONGANE



A suspect with the hijacked vehicle that police had traced to the cemetery via its tracking device.



Evidence found by police when they arrested suspected hijackers who had attended the funeral of an accomplice at a cemetery.

while and wanted to spend time with each other," she said. The sister who was raped was living in Pretoria, she said.

The relative, eventually making contact with the car rental company, had the vehicle's tracking signal activated.

Police in Pretoria, who were on patrol, were immediately contacted by Tracker and began their search.

Police from the Flying Squad and K9 Unit began tracking the vehicle through Atteridgeville, while

colleagues began closing off roads.

The vehicle's signal was eventually traced to the Lotus Gardens Cemetery, where a Tracker member, in an unmarked car, had tracked it.

As police lay in wait outside the cemetery taking up strategic positions near the entrance, the Tracker member drove into the cemetery and held the car under observation, alerting officers when the suspects drove off.

The suspects, realising that they were caught in a trap, tried to force

their way past officers in their vehicle before abandoning it and attempting to flee on foot.

Police, who surrounded the suspects, arrested them. The recovered an unlicensed .38 Special revolver and an Okapi knife, which one of the suspects tried to use as he attempted to resist arrest.

Pretoria K9 Unit spokeswoman Captain Colette Weilbach confirmed the arrests and said the suspects would appear in court today.

She said the arrests were made as

the suspects left the cemetery, where they had attended a funeral. "The gunman was arrested before he could shoot at police," she said.

Weilbach said the men, who were aged 35 and 21, would appear in the Pretoria Magistrate's Court on charges of possession of a stolen vehicle and possession of an unlicensed firearm and ammunition.

"Police are investigating the possibility of whether they can be linked to other possible crimes," she said.