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Calif. man accused of raping woman he met on Christian dating site

Michael Winter USA Today | Feb. 19, 2013

California police are investigating whether a Navy veteran charged with raping a woman he met on a Christian dating site may have used different aliases to arrange other meetings as he traveled across the country, ABC News reported Monday.

Sean Patrick Banks, 37, of Del Mar, near San Diego, has pleaded not guilty to two counts of rape and was released on $500,000 bond. He is accused of the November sexual assault of a La Mesa resident he met on ChristianMingle.com. He also pleaded not guilty to one count of burglary.

Police said Banks is known to have posed on the site as "Rylan Butterwood" and "Rylan Harbough," and are looking into whether he used other aliases as he "traveled frequently around various spots in the U.S." for work, said La Mesa Police spokesman Lt. Matt Nicholass.

"We're looking to see if there are any other victims ... who recognize him by his face, because they may not know his real name is Sean," he told ABC.

Neither Nicholass nor ABC identified the type of work Banks did or his former employers. Nicholass said Banks is currently unemployed.

In a statement, ChristianMingle said it was cooperating in the investigation.

"In addition to having experts manually review all profile content and photos, we have developed several proprietary, automated tools to ensure the highest possible level of safety and privacy for our communities," the company said.

ChristianMingle is one of more than 20 "niche-focused" dating sites operated by Spark Networks USA, based in Beverly Hills. Spark states that it "does not conduct background checks on the members or subscribers of this website."

The company includes a statement of faith: "The basis for our faith is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Lord and Savior of the world and God's written Word, the Bible. We believe that embracing what God said allows us to live in freedom, joy, and purpose."

Some of the company's other sites include JDate, BlackSingles and SilverSingles.

[Michael Winter writes for *USA Today*.]

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