

Winfrey, Glover star in 'Beloved'

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PHILADELPHIA - Oprah Winfrey and Danny Glover will film Toni Morrison's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel "Beloved" in Philadelphia, bringing millions in revenue to the city, state officials said.

The novel details the life of an escaped slave haunted by the child she murdered.

The Philadelphia Civic Center is being converted into a sound stage for the film,

which reunites Winfrey and Glover, who starred together in Steven Spielberg's "The Color Purple." Winfrey was nominated for an Oscar for her role in that film.

Gov. Tom Ridge pledged part of the money for the convention hall's conversion, saying "Pennsylvania is a very rich back lot."

Director Jonathan Demme said he was excited to direct the movie in the city where he directed Tom Hanks in

"Philadelphia."

"When we left Philadelphia we had such a great time we left saying once more in this lifetime we get a chance to film in Philadelphia," Demme said at a press conference Wednesday. "I'm delighted that it's come back to us so quickly."

About a thousand extras and several hundred crew members will be hired locally.

'Star Search' comic charged

By Robynn Tysver
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

OMAHA, Neb. - Vinson Horace Champ was a former "Star Search" comedian who worked the college circuit, delivering what some said was a raunchy act that played to mixed reviews.

He also appeared in four Midwestern states where women were raped on campus.

On Monday, the FBI named Champ as a suspect in those attacks and two attempted rapes. In each case, the attacker spit on his victims, quizzed them about their sex lives or asked them to pray for him.

A student in a piano room at Pasadena City College in California was the victim of the latest attack on May 6. Champ, 35, of Los Angeles, was charged with attempted rape and released on \$75,000 bail on Friday.

He did not return calls for comment.

The attack sparked the interest of police in Iowa, Nebraska, Illinois and Wisconsin, where they believe a serial rapist raped four women and attacked two others on college campuses in February and March, said FBI agent Tom Richardson in Omaha.

Three of the six attacks were in music rooms and two in computer labs.

Champ has performed at colleges in nine states this year - including all four states where the attacks took place - and was performing at or near the colleges at the time of at least three attacks, investigators said.

Police were trying to determine if he was performing in the area at the time of the other three attacks.

"We definitely have him in our area on the day of our rape here at Knox College," said



Detective Bob Horton of Galesburg, Ill.

According to police:

- A woman playing the piano in a basement at Union College in Lincoln was raped Feb. 6 by a man wearing a ski mask.

- Three days later, another woman was attacked in a music room at Knox College. Champ was performing there and in nearby Carl Sandburg Community College. He stayed at a motel in the area.

- On Feb. 10, a woman playing the piano and singing in a music room at Carthage College in Kenosha, Wis., was raped. Champ did a show that night at Milwaukee Area Technical College, 25 minutes away.

- A teacher was attacked Feb. 16 in her office at Augustana College in Rock Island, Ill. Another teacher came to her rescue, pulling off the assailant's mask. Champ had played at the college previously, but police were not sure if he was there that day.

- About four hours after that attack, a woman was raped in a computer lab at St. Ambrose University in Davenport, Iowa, just across the Mississippi River from Illinois.

- March 5, a business teacher was raped at the University of Nebraska in Omaha. Champ did a show earlier that day at the Mid-Plains Community College in

North Platte, a four-hour drive.

Champ, who drove a BMW, was arrested last Wednesday, the day after the latest attack in California.

The victim's screams brought other students who got Champ's license plate number as he fled, police said.

Gil Rocha, an art instructor at Mid-Plains Community College, said Champ's comedy act got mixed reviews.

"Some of the kids said it was kind of raunchy," he said.

Jamie Masada, owner of The Laugh Factory in Hollywood, was quoted in today's editions of the Chicago Tribune that Champ auditioned several times at the club.

"He was a guy trying to get beyond the struggling-comedian stage," Masada said. "He was trying to get on the club circuit here in Hollywood, but it was hard for him, so he was mostly a road comic."

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