

# Suspect in freeway rape gives up extradition fight

By ERIC BENTLEY JR.  
STAFF WRITER

A Saratoga man charged with raping a woman alongside the freeway near Capitola last September was extradited Saturday from Texas to stand trial in Santa Cruz County, the sheriff's office said today.

David Christopher Rangel, 25, had been held in Bexar County Jail in San Antonio since January, fighting extradition to Santa Cruz County, after FBI agents tracked him to San Antonio.

Rangel finally decided last week that he could not avoid being brought back to California, so he waived extradition, said Santa Cruz Sheriff's investigator Art Parga.

"He decided it was in his best interest not to fight it any longer, Parga said.

Rangel faces charges of rape,

oral copulation, battery with serious bodily injury and kidnapping.

He is accused of attacking a 27-year-old computer sales representative on the night of Sept. 20, while she was traveling from San Jose to her parents' vacation home in Rio del Mar.

Sheriff's deputies identified Rangel after they stopped a truck matching the description given by his victim. The victim then identified Rangel in a photo lineup, but Rangel failed to show up for an interview with San Jose investigators, and a warrant was issued for his arrest.

An FBI investigation led to San Antonio, where G-men found him staying at his grandmother's house, sheriff's deputies said.

The victim told deputies she first noticed a white Ford flatbed truck following her on

Highway 17 halfway between San Jose and Santa Cruz.

The truck followed her onto Highway 1, she said, and as she neared Park Avenue, it passed her on the right and then abruptly switched lanes in front of her, causing her to run into it.

Both vehicles pulled over, the woman said. Then as she was reaching for a pen to write down insurance information, the driver of the truck grabbed her and pulled her out of the car, she said.

She said the man then forced her across the highway and into bushes, where he raped her. The woman told deputies cars were driving by during the attack, but no one stopped.

The man fled after a Sheriff's car drove by, and the woman drove home and called Sheriff's deputies.