

1 Suspect In Marcia Case Probe

By GEORGE WATSON JR.

Metro police have narrowed the list of suspects in the murder of Marcia Trimble to a teenage boy who lives in the neighborhood, it was learned yesterday.

Detective Sgt. R. C. Jackson confirmed that investigators have "a prime suspect" in the slaying of the 9-year-old girl Feb. 25, 1975.

JACKSON refused to go into detail about the factors which led police in recent months to focus their probe on the teenage boy. But a source close to the investigation said the youth is a suspect because:

- He gave police an alibi about his whereabouts at the time Marcia was killed which has, in recent weeks, collapsed.
- He has refused to take a lie detector test requested in recent weeks by Metro detectives.

- Witnesses place the youth in the neighborhood where the murder occurred, within minutes of the time police now say the girl was killed.

Sources said yesterday that the teenager was the "first suspect in the case" but that attention shifted from him because investigators could not place him in the area at the time of the crime.

Police have established now that the suspect has given investigators "many contradictory statements which really discredit the hell out of his alibi," one investigator close to the case said.

INVESTIGATORS, sources said, have been compiling evidence against the suspect in recent weeks and have been conferring with Dist. Atty. Gen. Thomas Shriver about the case, "trying to determine from him when a move can be made."

It is known that the suspect told police he was playing basketball with another youth at the time Marcia was slain. That

alibi has since been discredited by one witness who gave police another story.

It is also known that the previous time established which police believed Marcia was murdered has changed substantially. Now, one source said "we can definitely place the boy at the crime scene because of the time change."

THE SUSPECT, like a number of other teenagers in the Trimble neighborhood, was given a lie detector test by police. The suspect, like the others, did pass a lie test.

However, many veteran investigators said at the time and still say "the boy who did kill Marcia Trimble passed the polygraph test, and it is something which is not hard to do."

Although Jackson and detectives Tommy Jacobs and Mike Erwin, also assigned to the case, won't talk about their investigation, sources familiar with what they are doing say "they have a prime witness who will testify in the case."

THE WITNESS, sources said, was with the killer just minutes after Marcia died. That witness, one source said, "has given the detectives what they need of piecing together exactly what did occur that day in February."

The young suspect

knew Marcia Trimble and had talked with her not too long before he met her and then got her upset," the source said.

"The boy killed Marcia," the source added, "and then ran to a neighbor's house. Besides choking Marcia to death, the boy also tried to have sexual relations with her."

AFTER THE young teenager killed Marcia Trimble, a source close to the probe said, "He ran to the residence near his home; he was sweating a

good deal and out of breath."

In recent weeks, a dozen or more earlier suspects in the unsolved case were interviewed again. They agreed to submit once again to a lie detector test, "but the suspect was the only one who definitely refused to take a second test," an investigator said.

Some young girls in the Trimble neighborhood have expressed a fear of the suspect to police investigators during their probe into the killing. A witness

said "some girls I know have told me he has pulled their hair, kissed on them, and I know he has scared some who have told their mothers."

ALSO, police sources said "the boy, we know, has confided in at least one

person and maybe another one very close to him."

Marcia, a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Trimble, of 4009 Copeland Drive, disappeared after walking across the street from her Green Hills area home on Feb. 25, 1975, to deliver Girl Scout cookies to a neighbor.

One of the city's most massive searches then ensued, involving Metro police, Civil Defense, neighbors, and hundreds of volunteers.

BESIDES Metro K-9 dogs searching the immediate area in the Trimble neighborhood, "trained dogs were brought in from out of town. However, it was 33 days before her body was discovered in a back corner of a garage at the home of John A. Thorpe, who lives a few hundred yards from the youngster's home."