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James K. Baker is the main suspect in a strange, apparently unprovoked attack on two women in Austin that occurred September 7.

Baker, 33, reportedly came up to the two women as the pair was talking on the front porch steps of the home of one of them.

He tapped or slapped the hood of a pickup truck owned by one of the alleged victims that was in the driveway of the house, remarking the woman "...had a nice truck." He then approached one of them, hitting her in the face and attempting to take the women's purses.

During the struggle with the women, Baker allegedly struck one of them in the head again. He was unsuccessful in trying to take their purses, but he then ran to the driver's side and entered the truck and tried to start it. One of the women managed to get the keys from him.

While the women were struggling with Baker, another man reportedly entered the truck and tried to take electronic equipment installed in the pickup. He too failed.

Both men then ran away from the scene, and the women called 9-1-1 to report the incident.

Capt. Paul Clute and Police Chief Donald Spicer were dispatched to the home on North Street. Learning that the assailant was identified as "J.K." by the women, Chief Spicer began searching for him, known to the officer as James Baker. He found Baker at the corner of North and Bank Streets, detained him and handcuffed the suspect. He was told by employees of a nearby grocery that Baker had broken through a wooden privacy fence behind the store. Chief Spicer noted that Baker appeared to be under the influence of drugs because of his slurred speech and staggering walk.

The police chief took Baker back to the scene of the assault, where he was identified by the women as the man who attacked them. Baker now faces two counts of attempted robbery, one of which is a Class B felony and the second a Class C felony; attempted carjacking, a Class B felony; battery as a Class A misdemeanor; and two Class B misdemeanors of criminal mischief and public intoxication.

A preliminary jury trial date of January 22 has been assigned to the case as has a public defender.

The Scott County Prosecutor's Office has also filed a Notice of Intent to file an Habitual Offender Enhancement based on Baker's past convictions. Since 1997, the notice related, Baker has been convicted of such felonies as burglary, theft, forgery, escape and aiding in carjacking.

An enhancement can cause Baker to receive a more serious sentence should he plead guilty or be convicted of the charges filed against him.