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6 women say that defendant robbed them

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In one case, a man pretended to sell Girl Scout cookies to a woman before, she said, he shoved her, then robbed her and her husband in their Northeast Philly home. In another, a thug pummeled a woman in Germantown before fleeing with her purse, the victim testified.

These women were two of nine who testified at a preliminary hearing yesterday that a man pushed or punched them as they were entering their homes, then grabbed their pocketbooks.

Authorities allege that Christopher Russell, 34, of Wells Street near Frontenac, in Oxford Circle, robbed 14 women, ranging in age from 47 to 90 years; the robberies occurred from September to March.

Municipal Judge David Shuter scheduled another court date for

Aug. 26 so five of the women, who weren't in court, could testify or prepare an affidavit. He did not rule on any of the cases

Six of the nine women who testified yesterday under questioning by prosecutor Caroline Keating identified Russell as the man who robbed them.

Defense attorney Michael J. Diamondstein said afterward that his client "maintains he did not do any of these" robberies.

Jean Kraemer testified that at about 1 p.m. on March 5, she was returning home on Benner Street near Lawndale, in Crescentville, when Russell asked if she wanted to buy Girl Scout cookies.

"He said they were \$2 a box," she said. "That got my attention."

She agreed to buy some, but when Russell returned to her door with a crumpled bag, he pushed her down, she said, and demanded money from her husband, who was already inside the house. Before he fled, Russell also

grabbed her handbag, the woman said.

Susan Demetrovits said that at about 4:45 p.m. on March 6, she had just entered her house on Morris Street near Woodlawn, in Germantown, when Russell pushed her.

"He proceeded to pummel my face" from the top of her head to her jaw, she said. He then grabbed her purse and fled, she said.

Maryanne Nuzzo said that at about 6:45 p.m. on Feb. 25, she was about to enter her home on Johnson Street, in West Mount Airy, when "all of a sudden, I heard a rushing sound" and then saw Russell behind her. He smiled, she said, then banged her head on her walkway. He then stole her purse and fled, she said.

Three women did not identify Russell as their attacker. Emily Campbell said, "Well, the guy who beat me up ain't here." Authorities suspect a cell phone left in her house may be linked to Russell. ★