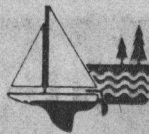


51-0 5, 1.9 Trailside Murders

Local



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Carpenter deserves to die, DA argues

By LYNN ELBER
The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Convicted Trailside Slayer David Carpenter was “an efficient serial killer” who deserves the gas chamber, a prosecutor told the jury in the penalty portion of the defendant’s murder trial.

Santa Cruz County District Attorney Arthur Danner said Carpenter, 54, shot his rape victims so they couldn’t testify against him.

“Take into consideration the kind of torment they must have gone through, when they thought they were going to die,” Danner said Tuesday. One who survived, Steve Haertle, had testified he was close enough to Carpenter to see the bullets in his gun, he said.

As Danner spoke, jurors looked at 8x10-inch photographs of Carpenter’s victims and alleged victims — six young women and a man — displayed on white post-board by the prosecution.

“You must decide if there is any evidence that could ever outweigh the lives of those people in those photographs,” Danner told the jury.

Danner recounted the attack on Ellen Marie Hansen and

Haertle, both 20, as the couple strolled through a state park.

“We do know that in the middle of something as sensitive and tender as two humans enjoying one another, that this man, this defendant, made a decision that they would be his next victims,” Danner said.

Ms. Hansen died. Haertle was seriously wounded but survived.

In a separate 1981 attack on Heather Scaggs, also 20, Carpenter “subjected her to the humiliation and outrage of rape, then callously shot her in the face and left her body out in the woods,” Danner said.

Carpenter was convicted by another jury last July of first-degree murder, attempted rape and attempted murder in the attack on Ms. Hansen and Haertle, and of rape and first-degree murder in the slaying of Ms. Scaggs.

Because of the finding of special circumstances, he faces death in the gas chamber or life in prison without the possibility of parole. In cases such as Carpenter’s, the death penalty is the “only logical conclusion,” Danner said.

Also accused of five slayings in Marin County, Carpenter has yet to stand trial for those.

The attacks on the Santa Cruz County victims were coldly premeditated, Danner said.

“This man was a rapist, and he murdered his victims so they couldn’t come back...and identify him; so they couldn’t come back and testify against him,” the prosecutor said. “This was his oath of conduct over 54 years he’s been here. He’s learned to be an efficient serial killer.”

Carpenter “hunted his prey” in Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park, where Ms. Hansen and Haertle were shot, as he did the five other victims in Marin County, Danner said.

Danner also attempted to belittle defense testimony from psychology experts who testified that Carpenter suffered from a personality disorder because he was an abused child and had a severe stutter.

Carpenter was abused, Danner conceded. But he said none of the experts testified that Carpenter had lost the “capacity to decide. There is no question this man had the capacity to exercise that choice,” to kill or not to kill.

Danner said he expected to conclude his closing remarks today. He will be followed by the defense. Both sides then have the right of rebuttal, Superior Court Judge Dion Morrow said.