

Jury hears tapes of Bandler threats

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A tape of Richard Bandler threatening the woman he is accused of murdering was played for a Santa Cruz County Superior Court jury yesterday.

Judge Christopher Cottle warned the jurors beforehand that listening to the tape would be unpleasant, because Bandler is heard to swear at and threaten Corine Christensen.

The tape was difficult to understand, so the jurors were given transcripts to follow along.

They heard Bandler yelling at Christensen, saying "I want it and I want it like a big dog. ... Do you have anything else to tell me? Yes, no, drop dead." He also told her he would "blow your brains out" if she didn't provide him the "data" he needed.

Assistant District Attorney Gary Fry has said Bandler made the tape surreptitiously the same morning Christensen was killed. Fry contends Bandler was demanding information about who had beaten up his friend James Marino, because Bandler believed Christensen was somehow behind the beating. Bandler wanted to get Christensen to say on tape that she had arranged the beating, Fry said.

Bandler and Marino both went to Christensen's house sometime after that recording was made on the morning of Nov. 3, 1986, Fry said. When they went inside, Bandler locked the door, pulled out a gun and said that the three of them would not be leaving the

place alive, Marino testified at Bandler's preliminary hearing.

Marino also testified that he saw Bandler point the gun at Christensen's head, heard a gunshot, then saw Christensen falling backward.

Marino was scheduled to testify at the trial now under way, but has failed to appear. A warrant has been issued for his arrest, but law enforcement officials have been unable to find him.

Bandler's attorney, M. Gerald Schwartzbach, does not contest that Marino and Bandler were both present when Christensen was killed, but he says Marino was the killer. Schwartzbach has told the jury that evidence will show that Marino lied when he testified at the preliminary hearing.

Schwartzbach said Marino had the motive to kill Christensen because he believed she was stealing from him, trying to blackmail him, and had set him up for the severe beating he received a week before her death.