

SJM 5/14/92 B-1 DEMONSTRATIONS

# Vandal arrests possible from Santa Cruz videos

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Santa Cruz police are reviewing videotapes of protests from the night of the Rodney King beating verdict in an attempt to identify and prosecute demonstrators who vandalized the Santa Cruz Police Station, City Hall and the Santa Cruz County Government Center.

"We don't want the community to think that we condone this type of behavior," said Santa Cruz Deputy Chief Jeff Locke. "People will be held accountable."

Similar video reviews were used by Los

Angeles police in the investigation that led to the arrests Tuesday of four gang members who were filmed beating a truck driver.

Locke said Santa Cruz investigators are reviewing two videotapes, one about 25 minutes long, the other about five minutes long, that were shot in the early morning hours of April 30.

At about 2 a.m. that morning, a crowd of 200 demonstrators broke 11 windows at the police station and city hall, spray-painted graffiti, smashed a neon sign and burned a roof support after setting fire to

an American flag.

Repairs will cost about \$4,000.

The demonstrators, mostly students from the University of California, Santa Cruz, then marched to the government center where they broke five thick glass windows, which cost about \$2,000 to replace.

Investigators will snap still photographs from footage that clearly depicts individual vandals and nearby witnesses, Locke said.

They then will take the photos to the UC-Santa Cruz police department for help in identifying suspects.

If suspects can be identified, said Locke, they could face charges of felony vandalism and arson.

Police said the two tapes were acquired from a private witness with ties to the university and a camera crew from KCBA-Channel 35, a Salinas-based television station, as part of a deal for exclusive rights to the story.

Other stations in the Monterey Bay area with footage have been asked by police for videotape but have refused to turn it over without a subpoena.

KCBA news director Bill Piggot said to  
*See TAPING, Page 1B*

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### ■ TAPING

*from Page 1B*

tape was given to police without his knowledge.

"Ordinarily we would require a subpoena," Piggot said. "It was a miscommunication."

"We're not here to help the police or the demonstrators. This isn't a situation I like to be in."

No witnesses or TV stations have been subpoenaed so far. But Locke said that if arrests are made and prosecutors press charges, he expects subpoenas will be issued to "get all the evi-

dence" for court cases.

Police concede that any prosecution for the vandalism could provoke controversy. Although a majority of the crowd was white, footage broadcast clearly shows several young black men joining with whites in smashing windows.

"There could be a serious backlash over this," said Locke. "But our job is to enforce the law. I don't condone vandalism in the name of free speech."

The final decision of whether to pursue criminal charges could come within a week. It will be

made by District Attorney Art Danner. Danner said Wednesday he has not seen any of the police video yet.

One of the students who led protests said he tried to deter any violence.

UC-Santa Cruz Senior Allen Sowell refused to say whether he would cooperate if asked for names of vandals by police. But Sowell said he understood why the investigation was occurring.

"They have their job to do," he said. "But people need to remember this wasn't just wanton violence, there was anger and frustration behind it."