

Mullin apparently knew murder victims

By Bruce Anderson
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Herbert W. Mullin, the 25-year-old Felton man, formally accused of six murders and expected to be charged with five more, apparently was acquainted with all the people he is suspected of killing.

He attended school with Jim Gianera, the former Ben Lomond resident, who was shot to death in his Santa Cruz home. His wife, Joan, was killed at the same time and with the same weapon.

George Gianera, the victim's brother, told the Valley Press last week that "if Jim didn't know his killer, he would have never let him in the house."

Likewise Robert Francis, the sole survivor of the family who was murdered near the Mystery Spot in Santa Cruz, recalls knowing Mullin. Francis probably escaped death, when he was away when his family was shot to death in their primitive cabin in the mountains.

District Attorney Peter Chang said last week that Mullin knew 72-year-old Fred Perez, who was gunned down while working in his front yard last Tuesday. "Perez knew Mullin. It's not clear just how he did, but he was a friend of his," Chang said.

Chang said Perez was "a very nice, friendly old man and he used to fish on the pier where it appears they got to know each other."

Latent fingerprints lifted from the scene of the murder of a Los Gatos priest also match those of Mullin. Rev. Henri Tomei was stabbed to death last November 2 in a confessional at St. Mary's Church in Los Gatos.

The sole witness to the priest's slaying, a St. Mary's woman parishioner who had come to the



A score of sheriff's officers and Santa Cruz policemen were on hand last Thursday to provide security for Herbert Mullin, the Felton man arraigned on six counts of murder last week in municipal court. In this photo officers are shown preparing to escort Mullin (see arrow) into court. VALLEY PRESS PHOTO

church and saw the murderer attacking Father Tomei, also participated in the identification procedure last week.

Investigators did not reveal whether or not she recognized Mullin as the attacker. She had told police originally that she saw the attacker kicking the priest.

However, police in Los Gatos said some very clear fingerprints and a palm print found on the confessional door were compared with Mullin's prints. They matched, according to police.

Los Gatos police officers were to go to the district attorney's office Friday to seek a murder complaint against Mullin "for the sake of formal procedure."

At a press conference last week DA Chang was asked if the killings had a similarity to the Ohta case, where the doctor and his family and secretary were slain by Felton resident John Linley Frazier in 1970.

"Generally speaking, there is a similarity in that it appears to be a psychopathic type of killing," Chang replied.

Asked if Mullin was under the influence of drugs at the time the crimes were allegedly committed, Chang replied, "not necessarily. It was the drug way of life more than anything else...the frustration, lack of goals, all the things that are connected with the psychopathic killer."

Mullin's attorney, Richard Pease, said it is "not beyond the realm of possibility" that he will try to get his client to enter an insanity plea.

"Whatever we decide," Pease said, "this case reinforces the tense feeling that I have always had against narcotics."

"It concerns me deeply, not only as his attorney. It concerns me also as a human being."