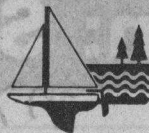


Trailside Murders

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Local



Witness identifies David Carpenter as being in park before shootings

5-31-84

By **FELIX GUTIERREZ**
The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — A Fresno florist identified Trailside slayings suspect David Carpenter as the stranger with whom he chatted not far from where two shooting victims were found in Henry Cowell Redwood Park.

Leland Fritz pointed Carpenter out to jurors Wednesday and testified that Carpenter had been wearing the same distinctive jacket and cap mentioned by one of the victims.

Fritz, who was camping in the park with his teen-age son on March 29, 1981, was asked if the man he had spoken to at a

park observation platform shortly before the shooting was in the courtroom.

"Yes," said Fritz, pointing to Carpenter at the defense table.

Carpenter was charged in Santa Cruz County with two counts of murder, one count of rape and one count of attempted rape. He is being tried in Los Angeles because of extensive pretrial publicity in Northern California.

"We heard some gunshots ... They sounded like they came from down that trail," Fritz said, pointing to a red arrow he had drawn on a courtroom map to show where Carpenter had walked.

Fritz said he thought the shots were just "a ranger who shot a snake along the

trail" until he started walking down the path and saw a young man coming toward him.

"He told us he was shot in the neck," Fritz testified. "At first I thought he was joking, then I got a good look at him."

The young man, who Fritz identified as Steve Haertle, had a swollen neck and "blood all over his hand."

Haertle, then 20, was hiking in the Santa Cruz mountains with his girlfriend, Ellen Hansen, also 20, when they were shot. Ms. Hansen was killed; Haertle survived a bullet wound that went from his throat to within two inches of his heart.

"He told me some man was going to rape his girlfriend and then proceeded to

shoot him and her," Fritz said. "He told me he (the attacker) was wearing a gold-yellow jacket with a baseball cap."

Fritz earlier testified Carpenter was wearing a gold-yellow nylon jacket and blue cap when he spoke with him at the observation platform on Ridge Trail in the redwoods park.

Carpenter is being tried in the slaying of Ms. Hansen and in the May 2, 1981 slaying of Heather Scaggs, 20, whose body was found on a hiking trail in Big Basin State Park in Santa Cruz County.

He also has been charged with five killings along trails in Marin County north of San Francisco in 1980.