

Closing arguments in Trailside trial

Trailside Murders

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LOS ANGELES — Jurors listened intently as final arguments in the Trailside case trial began this morning. Santa Cruz County District Attorney Art Danner told the jurors "incontrovertible, unequivocal" evidence points to David Joseph Carpenter as the man who shot and killed two people on Santa Cruz hiking trails in 1981.

Attorneys for both sides say they could finish their summations today. Judge Dion Morrow told the jury he has about an hour

of instructions to give them, so deliberations may begin Tuesday. Danner has said the six-man, six-woman jury could return a verdict by Thursday or Friday, after a break Wednesday for the Fourth of July holiday.

The jury must decide whether the balding 54-year-old printer killed Ellen Marie Hansen and shot her boyfriend, Steven Haertle, in March 1981 on a popular hiking trail in Henry Cowell State Park.

The jury must also decide if Carpenter raped and murdered 20-year-old UC Davis

co-ed Heather Scaggs while the two were on a trip to Santa Cruz.

Scaggs, whose body was found in Big Basin State Park on May 26, 1981, had worked with Carpenter at a Hayward trade school. She had been dead for about three weeks.

Danner's star witness in the case was Haertle, who in riveting testimony relived the minutes on the trail when a man he identified as Carpenter confronted him and Ellen Hansen. The man gunned them

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down with a revolver after telling them he wanted to rape the young woman.

A slug ripped through Hansen's neck, grazed his larynx and lodged under his sternum, but he was able to run down the trail and tell other hikers what had happened.

Some of those hikers testified in the trial, saying they saw Carpenter and his car in and near the park.

A criminologist testified the bullets taken from Haertle's chest and from the bodies of Hansen and Scaggs all were fired from the same gun.

A bank robber friend of Carpenter led authorities to that gun, which he said Carpenter gave to him to use in a bank job. The gun, a five-shot Rossi revolver, had been bought for Carpenter by a girlfriend, who testified he told her to report it stolen if she was ever questioned about it.

Ballistics tests showed the same gun was used in three murders in Marin County, according to testimony.

Carpenter is also charged with five murders in Marin County. He has one to trial on those charges.

"They're similar in many, many ways to the cases we've had in Santa Cruz County," Danner told the jury.

"The gun, you've been told, fired the lethal bullets into Ellen Hansen and Heather Scaggs (and) also was used on (Marin County victims) Anne Alderson, Cynthia Moreland and Richard Stowers," he said.

Jurors listened as Danner pointed to maps of the crime scenes in Santa Cruz County as well as one in the San Francisco Bay area to locate the three Marin County slayings.

He said Carpenter was unafraid of at-

tacking Hansen and Haertle, and that attack was similar to the one on Moreland and Stowers, who he said were "executed in a manner so they would not live to tell the story."

The stuttering, bespectacled ex-convict faces death in the gas chamber if convicted of the murder counts and if the jury finds to be true special allegations charged by the prosecution.

Those allegations include lying in wait, murder while attempting or committing rape and multiple murders.

Carpenter has served 17 years in prison for kidnapping, rape, attempted murder and robbery. The so-called Trailside murders in Marin County began shortly after he was released from a halfway house in the San Francisco Bay area.