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Trailside Murders

# A Portrait Of The Trailside Killer Suspect

By PEGGY R. TOWNSEND  
Sentinel Staff Writer

David Joseph Carpenter was a man who proposed marriage to a woman on their first meeting, enjoyed the ballet and once counseled a convicted bank robber to invest his loot instead of spending it so quickly.

That portrait of the trailside killer suspect emerged this week from hundreds of pages of preliminary hearing transcripts which were made public for the first time Wednesday.

The transcript included testimony from a former girlfriend, a long-time acquaintance and an ex-convict who was suspected of six bank robberies.

Carpenter, a balding printer, is currently

facing first-degree murder charges in connection with the death of Ellen Hansen at Henry Cowell Park and the slaying of Heather Scaggs, a San Jose woman who disappeared after a scheduled appointment with Carpenter.

He is also facing an attempted murder charge for the shooting of Hansen's companion, Steven Haertle, and has been charged with five trailside killings in Marin County.

He could face the death penalty if he is convicted of those charges.

Candace Townsend, a former girlfriend of Carpenter, was one of the key witnesses in the preliminary hearing, according to the transcript.

Townsend, a 30-year-old bartender who once lived in the Carpenter household, linked the suspected murderer to a gold jacket which

authorities allege Hansen and Haertle's attacker wore in Henry Cowell Park.

She also testified Carpenter owned shoes and clothing which were similar to those worn by the attacker.

According to her testimony, Townsend met Carpenter when her car broke down in San Francisco while on a trip from Los Angeles to Guerneville.

She testified she was trying to restart her car when Carpenter stopped to help, then offered to use his own AAA card to have her vehicle towed to a nearby garage.

Townsend said she agreed to Carpenter's offer of help and also accepted a ride to Sebastapol from him.

She testified the 51-year-old suspect said he had to go to the area anyway.

The slender and soft-spoken Townsend testified Carpenter drove over the Golden Gate Bridge to the Mount Tamalpais area. It is alleged he killed at least three persons in that area.

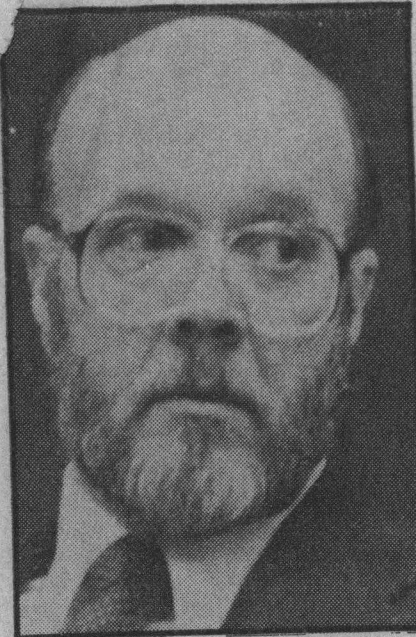
Carpenter pulled his car into a dirt pullout near the park and offered her money to have sex with him, Townsend testified.

By then it was 9 p.m. and very dark. "I told him I was not a prostitute. I didn't want his money," Townsend testified.

"The conversation led into having sex with him and marrying him and by that time I was frightened, apprehensive, and I had sex with him," she said.

"He asked me to marry him and I agreed with him."

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Dan Coyro/Sentinel

David Joseph Carpenter

example, he baptizes a child, the baptism is invalid.

# PORTRAIT OF THE TRAILSIDE SUSPECT

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Townsend said the couple drove to Sebastopol for dinner, then returned to Carpenter's Sussex Street home which he shared with his elderly parents.

Townsend said she lived in an upstairs bedroom while Carpenter lived in a downstairs apartment.

She described Carpenter's mother as domineering and said his father spent most of his day in a bedroom where he drank approximately one gallon of wine each day, according to the transcript.

Townsend said Carpenter didn't have much of a social life. He went to the ballet, subscribed to the Wall Street Journal and often took his parents' dog for a walk.

She claimed the suspected killer loved her, but she didn't love him. She admitted she was "shining him on" in order to have a place to stay, according to the transcript.

Townsend, who also admitted to being wanted in connection with a theft and forgery case, told how Carpenter's stutter would be worse on some occasions than others.

When the two sat in a parked car at Mount Tamalpais during their first meeting, "He hardly stuttered. He seemed to be very comfortable and didn't stutter," Townsend testified.

Shortly before his arrest, Carpenter's stutter was getting worse, she said.

According to her, Carpenter had a way of "reconstructing" sentences in order to

avoid having to start them with letters which he had trouble saying.

For instance, the letter "M" was a hard letter for him to pronounce, she testified.

According to Townsend, Carpenter took to wearing a knit cap all the time and began growing a beard starting in April — even when the weather was 80 degrees.

The Henry Cowell Park attack occurred March 29.

Townsend said Carpenter also told her that his friends nicknamed him "Devious Dave."

In May, she said, Carpenter left a note on her pillow telling her she had to move.

The last time she saw him was May 8 or 9, she testified.

Convicted bank robber Shane Williams and his wife, Karen, also took the stand to describe how Carpenter gave them a gun which police now allege is the murder weapon.

They also told how Carpenter helped them plan a robbery and how they decided to turn the gun over to authorities in an attempt to get a better "deal" for themselves after they were arrested on bank robbery charges.

According to Shane Williams, Carpenter took them to a San Francisco warehouse where he once worked and he showed them an ingenious hiding spot beneath a pile of cardboard and wood scraps.

Carpenter pulled a gun out from the hiding spot and gave it to the couple.

Williams testified Carpenter showed them how to use it and told them they

needed to clean it.

"He told me I had to clean it because he had fired it off the previous weekend," Williams testified. The date, he said, was May 7 or 8.

Scaggs disappeared May 2.

During discussions with Carpenter, Williams said the murder suspect helped them to plan a bank robbery and told him he was "foolish" because he spent all his loot quickly instead of investing it.

He also warned the couple about getting caught with the gun he had given them because it was on loan from a friend, according to Williams' testimony.

"... I thought that was probably the most illogical thing I had ever heard him say," Williams said.

After Carpenter was arrested, Williams and his wife discussed turning the weapon over to police, but decided to bury it in a vacant lot instead.

Later, when Williams was arrested on robbery charges, he agreed to show authorities the location of the gun in hopes it would get him a lighter sentence for his crimes, according to testimony in the transcript.

A woman who met Carpenter through a

lonely hearts club testified she was the one who supplied the gun to Carpenter.

Mollie Joe Purnell testified she bought the gun for Carpenter because she owned him money and he said the debt would be wiped out if she got the weapon.

Authorities now allege the gun is the murder weapon.

Purnell testified she met Carpenter through the Amanda Blair Friendship Club which she operated.

She said the club was designed to get lonely people together. When she opened it up to prisoners, Carpenter began writing.

Purnell said she met Carpenter in 1980 after he was released from Lompoc prison.

According to her, Carpenter was a kind man who helped her financially and gave her key rings to sell at a flea market.

Purnell, who was granted immunity for her testimony, said Carpenter later said she owned him money for the key rings and insisted on the gun purchase as payment.

She finally purchased the weapon in October 1980, she said.

She testified Carpenter "was a great friend to me after my husband died."

## FALKLANDS

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the parties.

Britain