

First holdup was 'surreal,' suspect wrote

Crime + Criminal 1-30-99
Journal entry describes the thrill
of armed robbery, prosecutor says

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Freeman
UCSC freshman
is accused of
armed robbery.

SANTA CRUZ — In her journal, college freshman and budding writer Emma Rose Freeman described her first armed robbery as a "surreal" experience, a prosecutor said Friday.

The 18-year-old UC Santa Cruz student used that word to describe what it felt like to point a gun at a store clerk and see the expression it caused.

"She said something about having the need to do it again ... and she did do it again," Assistant District Attorney Gretchen Brock said as Freeman pleaded innocent to two counts of armed robbery.

Freeman is accused of being the gun-toting half of a pair of bandits who robbed a Capitola hair salon Jan. 16 and a Santa Cruz Costco store five days later.

Her boyfriend and alleged crime partner, Anthony Cristofani, a 23-year-old UCSC philosophy major, is

free on bail and is to be arraigned next month on two counts of armed robbery.

Brock mentioned Freeman's journal entry after defense lawyer Doug Fox asked Judge Heather Morse to release the young woman on her own recognizance. Fox asked that she be allowed to return to Los Angeles — "back on solid ground" — to live with her parents.

Fox said Freeman's father could act as "court probation officer" and see to it his daughter would not carry any weapons or enter any stores with criminal intent. He also pointed out that Freeman had never spent a day in jail before her arrest last week.

But Brock responded, "She shouldn't be allowed into the community." In her diary, Freeman "talked about the foreign experience of pointing a gun at someone,

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and how she feels some need to continue to rob, to continue to point guns at people," Brock told the judge. "The court has to put public safety ahead of all other considerations."

The robbery victims are still traumatized, Brock added.

"They thought she would pull the trigger on them."

Morse denied the defense's request and maintained Freeman's bail at \$150,000. Fox said that means she will remain in custody for the time being.

At the same time, the judge acknowledged Freeman was not the typical armed robber.

"Something obviously did go wrong," Morse said. "I agree we do have to find out what went wrong, and there are ways to find out while she's in custody."

Freeman, the daughter of a psychiatric nurse and a Disney manager, is a National Merit Scholar who graduated last year from Immaculate Heart, a reputable school for girls in Hollywood. Her parents and college acquaintances have said she seemed to change after she went off to college and met Cristofani. Friends described the pair as thrill-seekers.

If convicted, Freeman would be ineligible for probation because of the gun and would face up to 26 years in prison. "She's definitely scared," her father,

Alan Freeman, said Friday.

Outside the courtroom, the defense lawyer said Freeman's journal was "not a program of criminal activity."

"According to Emma, if you look at every page, that page wouldn't stand out," Fox said. "It's filled with lyrics, poetry headings, and dream recordings. There was no forethought here."

In both heists, a neatly dressed couple fled in a maroon Acura with its license plates covered. Teacher's aide Craig Dickson, 24, Cristofani's roommate, is accused of being the getaway driver.

Cristofani and Dickson both posted \$25,000 bail shortly after their arrests, but a judge has since raised their bail

amounts to \$100,000 apiece.

Cristofani's lawyer, Paul Meltzer, took issue Friday with a news account about Cristofani's arrest. Police said Cristofani had his passport in his pocket and appeared to be clearing out his apartment.

"The suggestion that he had a passport and was heading to Guatemala is misleading," Meltzer said. "He was moving into his family home (in Los Gatos) and nothing else."

Cristofani had lost his driver's license and had been using the passport for identification, Meltzer said. The lawyer added that Cristofani's parents were with him during the arrest. They immediately posted his bail.