

Trailside Murders Skaggs' boyfriend tells of confrontation with Carpenter after her disappearance

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By FELIX GUTIERREZ

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LOS ANGELES — The boyfriend of "Trailside Slayings" victim Heather Scaggs testified he talked to murder defendant David Carpenter in San Francisco on the evening Ms. Scaggs disappeared.

"I asked him if it was true that he planned to go to Santa Cruz" with Ms. Scaggs, Dan Pingle told a Superior Court jury Thursday.

Carpenter "agreed he had made those plans with Heather," but said he had missed the early morning appointment "because he overslept that day," Pingle testified.

Pingle said he last saw Ms. Scaggs alive when she left their San Jose apartment early the morning of May 2, 1981. That evening, Pingle said, he confronted Carpenter on a San Francisco sidewalk.

Pingle had driven to San Francisco with a friend, Stan Howe, after Ms. Scaggs failed to return to the apartment that evening. He said his girlfriend was supposed to drive to Santa Cruz with Carpenter to discuss a car purchase and possibly a job with a man named "Richard."

Carpenter refused to answer any questions about "Richard" in the half-hour conversation on the San Francisco sidewalk, Pingle testified.

Carpenter, 53, worked with Ms. Scaggs at the California Trade School in Hayward. He told Pingle that after missing his appointment with Ms. Scaggs he had his station wagon fixed in San Francisco and had no other means of transportation, Pingle said.

Pingle said he and Howe waited for an hour on the sidewalk near Carpenter's home until Carpenter returned.

Police investigators testified earlier that Carpenter told them he went to the ballet on the evening of Ms. Scaggs' disappearance.

Ms. Scaggs, 20, also was seen on the morning of May 2, 1981, by a clerk at the store where she was supposed to meet

Carpenter.

Her nude body was found in Big Basin State Park in Santa Cruz County on May 26, 1981. Carpenter is charged with one count each of rape and murder in her death.

He also is charged with one count each of murder, attempted murder and attempted rape in an attack on Ellen Marie Hansen and Steve Haertle, at the Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park on March 29, 1981.

Carpenter, who has served 17 years in prison on convictions of attempted murder, rape, robbery and kidnapping, is being tried in Los Angeles because of pretrial publicity in Northern California.