

jury selection to begin today

11-2-87 *Murder*

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SANTA CRUZ — Jury selection in the much-anticipated trial for guru-turned-murder-suspect Richard Bandler is set to begin today in Superior Court.

Bandler, 37, is accused of murdering a 28-year-old Capitola woman last Nov. 3.

The case has drawn international attention because of Bandler's teachings and writings in the field of Neuro-Linguistic Programming, a psychotherapeutic technique used to help identify and improve communication patterns.

Bandler developed the technique with his psychology professor when Bandler was a UCSC student in the 1970s. It since has been widely marketed.

Bandler now lists his occupation as publisher, mostly of his own books on NLP techniques.

A number of NLP devotees have attended Bandler's earlier court hearings and a large crowd is expected when the trial begins.

Assistant District Attorney Gary Fry says he has been besieged by journalists and free-lance writers about the case. At least three people have called wanting information for books, he says.

Among the inquiries has been one from the Australian public-broadcasting system, which did a series on NLP shortly before Bandler's arrest.

The case is spiced with allegations of Bandler's free spending for cocaine and sex. Detectives said they found uncashed royalty checks for thousands of dollars when they searched Bandler's home after the killing.

Testimony at an earlier proceeding indicated Bandler was using so much cocaine that his supplier put him on rationing.

The supplier was the murder victim, Corine Christensen, according to testimony at Bandler's preliminary hearing. She was a high-priced prostitute, working out of the area's better hotels and motels, according to testimony.

The prosecution's main witness, James Marino, has testified that Christensen had an insatiable appetite to sexually dominate men and women. Marino said the dead woman often had sex with six or seven partners a night.

Marino testified that he was with Bandler when Bandler pulled out a gun and shot Christensen in the head right after she had inhaled a "line" of cocaine.

Marino testified that Bandler was mad at Christensen, believing that she had set up Marino for a severe beating at a Halloween party. Marino said Bandler also was angry that Christensen was romantically pursuing Bandler's girlfriend.

M. Gerald Schwartzbach, Bandler's attorney, called Marino's testimony "lies."

Schwartzbach contends that it was Marino who killed Christensen in retribution for his beating.

Prosecutor Fry relied heavily on Marino's testimony at the preliminary hearing to have Bandler held to answer on the charge.

But the standard of proof required at a preliminary hearing is much less than the standard of "beyond a reasonable doubt" in a trial.

Municipal Court Judge Tom Kelly, who conducted that hearing, said that after hearing the evidence he was sure of just one thing beyond a reasonable doubt: the killer had been in his courtroom.

Beneath all the trappings of NLP, cocaine and sex is the real crux of the case. It's a whodunit.

Three people were present the morning of the murder. One is dead and the other two are pointing fingers at each other.