

✓ Killer's wife takes stand

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By JOHN McNICHOLAS

Sentinel Staff Writer

SANTA CRUZ — The wife of a convicted killer took the stand in the double-murder trial of Royal Kenneth Hayes this morning to testify about Hayes' links to a band of Midwest criminals.

Sondra Johnson, 47, is herself serving state and federal terms after pleading guilty to firearms violations and conspiracy to commit murder in the killing of a Minnesota man.

This morning she confirmed earlier testimony in Hayes' trial regarding her husband, Jim Johnson's manufacture of a silencer. He is alleged to have fit the silencer to the .45-caliber automatic pistol Hayes is accused of using here to kill a San Francisco-area couple in a drug-money ripoff in 1981.

Mrs. Johnson, testified she never had been involved in crime before meeting Johnson in Minneapolis in 1980.

A native of Long Island, she had been married to a high school principal and worked for the director of an anti-poverty agency in Bridgeport, Conn., she said.

Mrs. Johnson said she has two children, a son and daughter aged 24 and 23. Both recently graduated from college, she said, and her son is planning to be a policeman.

Within four months of meeting Johnson, the then-Sondra Sellinger was buying firearms and helping him deal marijuana and cocaine, she said.

She had no reservations about starting a life of crime at age 43, she said, "because I wanted love. He didn't force me (to help), but if I did not, he would have left me."

She said Johnson turned their bedroom into a factory for manufacturing silencers in anticipation of an armored-car robbery he and Hayes were planning.

But Hayes called and had the gun and silencer delivered to California just days before the killings, she testified.

Hayes, 47, is accused luring his ex-lover Lauren deLaet, 36, and her companion Donald MacVicar, 32, to a remote spot on the UCSC campus, killing them and taking \$250,000 from them.

Johnson is now serving a 17-year term for violations of federal weapons statutes and for the killing of a Minnesota man alleged to have been a police informant.

After nine months in jail, she agreed to cooperate with authorities. She has been granted immunity from prosecution for her testimony in this trial.

Her husband has refused to testify in Hayes' trial, said Assistant Santa Cruz District Attorney Madeleine Boriss.