

# Daughter arrested in slaying

*Murder 1-19-82*  
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SANTA CRUZ — Police have called off the search for a missing Gilroy woman and arrested her daughter in connection with what police say is a murder investigation.

Paula Helene Burnson, 30, was arrested Thursday afternoon and booked on suspicion of murder in the death of her



**PAULA  
BURNSON**

mother, 64-year-old Elvina Burnson.

Police also booked her as an accessory after the suspected killing.

The elder Burnson was last seen Jan. 7

as she traveled from Gilroy to Santa Cruz to take her daughter to a drug rehabilitation program, according to Santa Cruz police Lt. Joe Haebe.

Burnson's body has not been recovered, but police say they have evidence that shows she was killed and that Paula Burnson and her boyfriend, Robert Charles Beckwith, were involved.

On Jan. 12, Santa Cruz police arrested the 43-year-old Beckwith on a murder charge. He has not been arraigned.

Paula Burnson had been at Dominican Hospital since Jan. 10, when police took her there. Prosecutor Christine McGuire said hospital officials determined Thursday that she no longer was a danger to herself or others, and released her to the police, who arrested her.

Police believe Elvina Burnson was killed at the couple's

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## Slaying: Daughter arrested; police reveal few details about investigation

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Kaye Street apartment and her body disposed of. Haebe said 50 to 60 people saw the couple driving Elvina Burnson's white Toyota Corolla with a brown trash can tied to the back. Police had said earlier that her body may be in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

"We know more of where she isn't than where she is," Haebe said Friday afternoon.

Haebe said physical evidence is being

examined to determine if Paula Burnson participated in the slaying or only in the disposal of the body.

Police have not released a motive, and have not said what evidence they have that the woman was killed.

Late Friday, Santa Cruz police Sgt. Steve Clark said they are no longer searching for the body. He declined to say why the search had been called off or if her body had been

recovered. He said police will interview more witnesses this weekend, but declined to elaborate.

Meanwhile, Beckwith was assigned a new attorney Friday. Public Defender Jon Minsloff was removed from the case because his office had represented the prosecution's key witness in a previous case. Sean Gallagher was appointed to represent Beckwith, though he disclosed that his law

firm, Page, Salisbury and Dudley, had represented Beckwith in another case and had represented the husband of another prosecution witness.

Beckwith will be arraigned Jan. 31. Burnson is set to be arraigned Tuesday. Both are in County Jail on \$1 million bail each.

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