

# Santa Cruz stunned by quake damage

Earthquake - 1989 - City of Santa Cruz

Fresno Bee 10-19-89

## Authorities dig for bodies in mall's rubble

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Bee staff writers

**SANTA CRUZ** — Laid-back Santa Cruz was in a daze Wednesday, not quite comprehending the scope or severity of the earthquake that sent the beach town into convulsions Tuesday night.

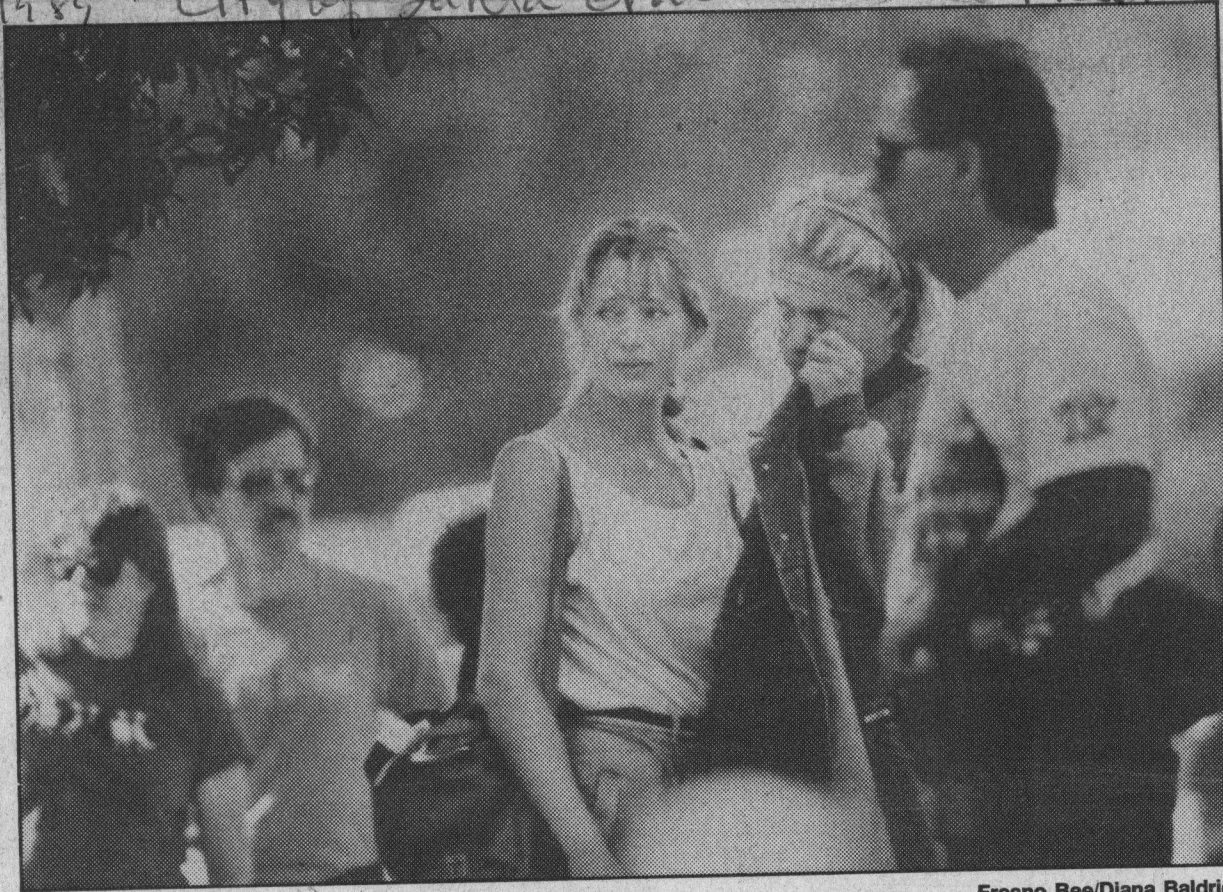
At least two people were killed when buildings collapsed along the Pacific Garden Mall in the central business district, and authorities worked last night to uncover a third body believed buried in the rubble of a coffee store on the outdoor mall.

About 315 people were treated for minor injuries at the two Santa Cruz hospitals, and 43 had been admitted by late afternoon.

Outside the mall area, damage was not as obvious as in San Francisco to the north. Still, three quarters of the mobile homes in Santa Cruz County were knocked off their foundations, hundreds of buildings sustained hidden damage and nearly 1,000 city residents had moved into shelters by nightfall Wednesday.

Many who were evacuated because of gas leaks chose to sleep outdoors at a football field.

With power out and water pipes dry through most of the day, the few open stores in the area were swamped by customers seeking food, bottled water, charcoal, candles, flashlights and batteries. Outside Zanotto's market in downtown Santa Cruz, 485 people were in the



Fresno Bee/Diana Baldrice

People keep a vigil outside a cafe where a worker was trapped during the earthquake.

slow-moving line at noon.

Still, serious as the numbers are, the mood in Santa Cruz was far from grim.

The damage here is much like the situation in the Coalinga earthquake of 1983. But working-class and isolated Coalinga seemed to take it harder, at least initially, than this resort city of students, hippies, sunbathers and retirees.

Streets paralleling the mall were filled with college-age youth, many on bicycles, sightseeing and social-

izing in the sunny warmth.

Street musicians who usually perform in doorways along the mall simply moved a block or two to side streets, where they played for unusually large crowds.

Behind the Santa Cruz Roasting Co., young men in the crowd chatted and joked while the friends of Robin Ortiz held hands and waited for official word of her fate.

Ortiz, 22, an assistant manager of the coffee business, is believed to have been crushed when a brick

wall collapsed on the store at the north end of the mall.

Allen White, 18, was in a bookstore in the basement of the building when the shaking began.

"It was unbelievable," he said. "It got louder and louder. My adrenaline was going, and I tore off in a flash, flew out of there. It was chaos on the mall, walls came down in sheets."

Authorities sent trained dogs into

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## Few signs of life at freeway

By RAY SOTERO  
Bee Capitol bureau

**OAKLAND** — As darkness fell, rescue workers perched atop a fire engine boom poked an infrared-sensitive device into the rubble of the Nimitz Freeway and picked up signs of life.

A fireman scampered down from the elevated platform and radioed for help.

"We need more equipment," the firefighter said. "We have positive signals."

It was the first sign of life discovered in a day of grim searching through the wreckage of the Nimitz Freeway, and rescue workers struggled into the night to free the person trapped inside.

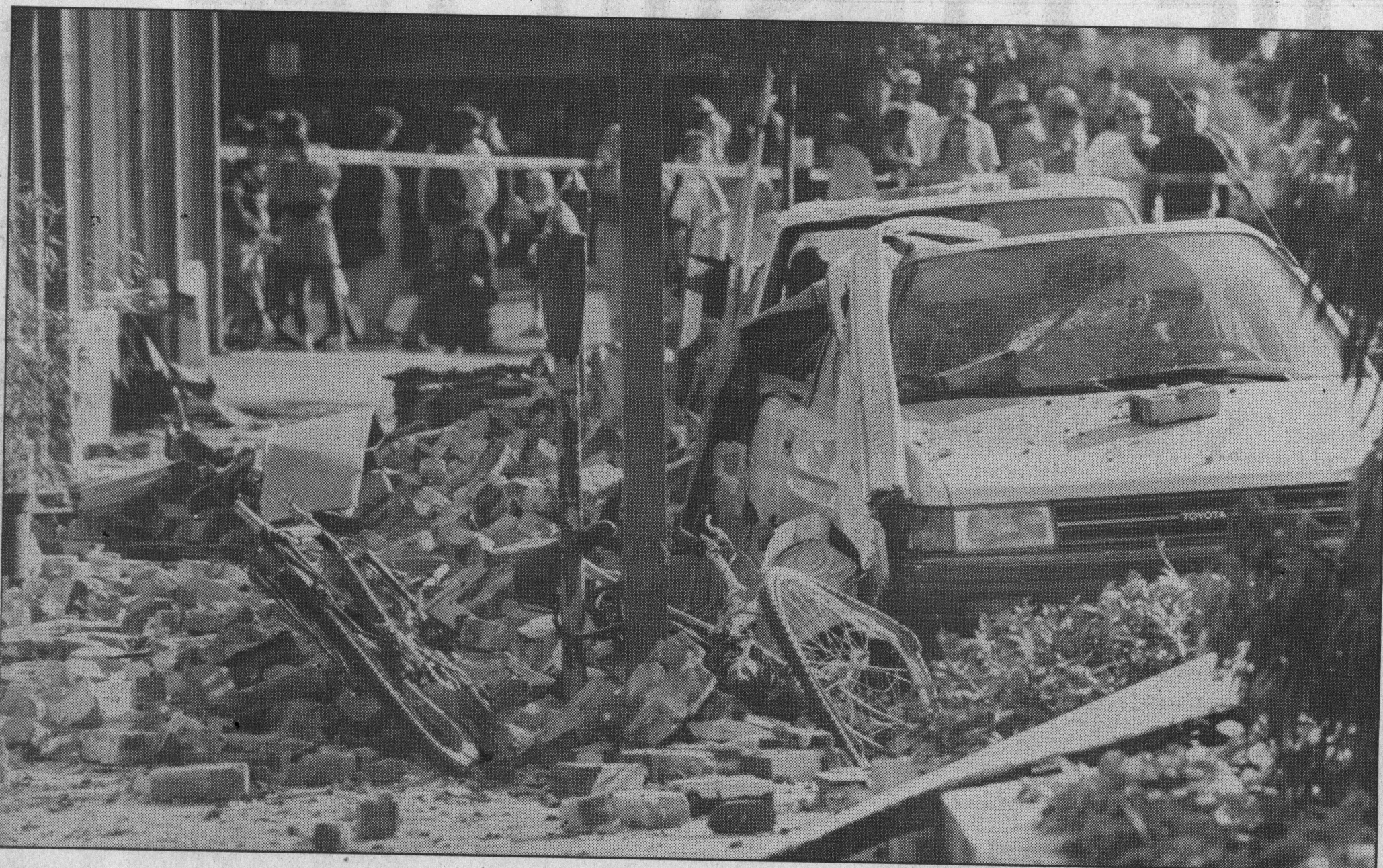
But it was in vain. The man was dead before he could be pried from his car. And after searching through the rubble since 4 a.m., rescue workers had not managed to pull a single survivor out.

At least 13 confirmed deaths had been reported by Wednesday afternoon and as many as 250 people were still believed trapped in the tangle of concrete left by the earthquake that toppled 1.5 miles of Oakland's Nimitz Freeway Tuesday night.

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# Bay quake day 2 — a special report



Rubble from collapsed buildings on Cooper Street off the Pacific Mall crushed bicycles and smashed cars.

Fresno Bee/Diana Baldrice

## Santa Cruz

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that and other damaged buildings, but there were no signs of life as of 3 p.m., according to police Sgt. Joe Haebe.

Motioning to the remains of the coffee store, Haebe said, "If anyone could live under that, I'd like to meet him."

The body of another employee, Sean McCormick, 21, was removed from the store shortly after the 5:04 p.m. quake Tuesday. A young woman was rescued, screaming but alive, hours after the collapse. She was in intensive care last night.

Rescuers called off the search for Ortiz at about 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, for fear that a series of sharp aftershocks would topple more walls of bricks.

The decision to stop digging angered a group of her friends, who began chanting in protest and then walked through a police line. Four people were arrested, including one who

suffered a bloody nose that apparently occurred when he was wrestled to the street by the officers. The events were recorded by news photographers until angry police ordered them to leave the area or face arrest.

Frustrated authorities spent much of the day waiting for a load of lumber to arrive, so they could shore up the crumbling walls and resume the search.

Tuesday evening, rescue workers also carried the body of Catherine Triman, 75, of nearby Scotts Valley, from inside the Ford's clothing store on the mall.

Fire broke out in the store after the roof collapsed.

In all, about a half dozen buildings collapsed on the mall, most of them turn-of-the-century unreinforced masonry structures.

Mayor Mardi Wormhoudt said: "At 5:04, historic downtown, which is on the National Register of Historic Places, ceased to exist. We will build again, but not as it was."

City spokesman Larry Pearson said the Coalinga earthquake had made Santa Cruz offi-

cials "very aware we had a big potential problem."

Little was done to ward off that problem, Pearson said, "because the city could not force property owners to make reinforcement repairs of \$250,000 to \$500,000 each."

Next door to the coffee store, four employees of Kelly's French Pastries escaped unhurt because, manager Barbara Johnson believes, premonitions prompted earthquake drills.

"I started having dreams three months ago about earthquakes, so we all made plans that when it hit, we'd get under the big butcher block table," Johnson said. "Things came down all around us, but we made it. I feel it's like inner guidance that saved us."

Damage was not nearly as extensive in other area beach towns. A half-dozen businesses in Capitola village were boarded up because of broken windows. Chimneys crumpled on houses in Rio Del Mar and Aptos, but signs of serious structural damage were not obvious.

In several areas of Santa Cruz County, the ground itself shows dramatic signs of the

quaking. Like stretch marks, long cracks are visible in vacant lots and on hillsides.

Along the San Lorenzo River, which separates the historic Boardwalk amusement park from downtown Santa Cruz, one section of an asphalt bicycle path rose seven inches.

Looting was reported in the devastated downtown, but Gary Gordon, a 30-year-old substitute teacher who lives in the Colonial Hotel on the mall, was determined not to be one of the victims.

Gordon slept in a parking lot behind the hotel to fend off looters.

"Some young guys tried to rob us," he said, pointing to his friend Javier Valadez, 25, who also lives in the hotel.

Gordon and Valadez maintained a vigil at the back of their hotel to protect their possessions, and Gordon wondered whether he would teach this week. He then looked at himself dressed in a shirt and shorts and said, "I can't teach in shorts."