

Capitola Mall Murder

# ✓ Capitola's suspect list still grows

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CAPITOLA — Police have interviewed, and ruled out, more than 100 "look-alike" suspects in connection with the Aug. 27 murder of an elderly woman at the Capitola Mall, but have yet to positively identify a suspect.

According to Capitola Police Detective Sgt. Herb Ross, three to four officers are still working full time on the investigation into the apparent robbery and beating death of Emily Shaw of Santa Cruz.

Police are attempting to track down a young man who was last seen running away from just outside of Gottschalks in the mall that afternoon — leaving Shaw dying of severe head injuries.

The young man is described as 18 to 21-years-old, 6 feet, 1 inch tall, 160 pounds, with blond hair and blue eyes.

He escaped through an opening in a brick wall that borders the west end of the mall and, police believe, headed up into Rodeo Gulch after running past a neighborhood park.

"We're still chasing down the leads — a lot of them are look-alikes — and still receive them at a rate of one to two a day," Ross said. "We contact them (possible suspects) and then have to talk to the three witnesses they provide us for their alibi. It's an ongoing thing."

The list of those still to be contacted is about 75 to 100 names long and growing, although at a much slower rate than the days after the killing.

The list of possible suspects was so long, police said, because his description matched that of about "50-percent" of the young men in Santa Cruz County.

"We're of the opinion he may not be in the area now, but he's from the area," Ross said. "He took the only escape route he could have

taken, he knew where the opening (in the wall) was. He went straight for the park and from the park, where to go. It's not something you just guess."

Forensics experts with the state Department of Justice were able to obtain some fingerprints from the woman's car and they have been fed into the computerized Automated Latent Print System (ALPS), Ross said.

No matches on suspects have been returned, he said. That only means the suspect may not have been previously convicted or booked in connection with a serious crime, according to Ross, since only prints of felons that are fed into the system.

"Every time we get a look-alike, we take their picture and prints and also send a copy down to DOJ in Sacramento," he said.

"Somebody knows him and we're going to find him," Ross said. "There's no doubt in my mind. It's just a matter of time."