

'That's Him, Told Artist

*Frankie
Mundis*

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Steven Haertle struggled to describe the man who fatally shot his girlfriend and wounded him in an attack at Henry Cowell Park.

He could barely talk because of the tubes in his throat and the wound that swelled his neck.

Finally, he gestured at the picture of the attacker drawn by 32-year-old artist Dennis Dederick.

"That's him," said Haertle in a hoarse whisper.

Dederick — who designs signs for the city of Santa Cruz — was called into the case shortly after the man shot Haertle and killed 20-year-old Ellen Hansen as they walked on a popular hiking trail.

Dederick went to Haertle's room at Community Hospital where he and detectives worked to draw a sketch of the man who attacked the couple.

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SEE BACK PAGE

FROM PAGE 1

The sketch was circulated throughout California, and five days later, a Ben Lomond woman gave the name David Joseph Carpenter to police.

Two other persons gave detectives the same name and San Jose Police — after seeing the sketch — called investigators with information about Carpenter several weeks later.

Within a week, Carpenter was arrested on suspicion of the Henry Cowell Park shootings which occurred March 29.

He is also a suspect in as many as seven killings in Marin County although he has not been charged with any of those murders.

Dederick began drawing for police only about six months ago when a detective asked him if he would mind testing out his drawing skills with crime victims.

Dederick, whose father was a policeman and who has an art degree from UCSC, agreed. Soon, he was being called upon in more and more cases.

It is not easy drawing someone using only the descriptions of a crime victim.

Dederick must listen to the victim and pick up the small details that make up a person's face so he can make an accurate picture.

In the Henry Cowell shooting, Dederick already had an IDK drawing made by detectives. He knew the suspect was a middle-aged man who was balding and wore a jacket with a slogan about beer drinking on the back.

"I like to get as much information as possible," said Dederick, "because I have to form a picture in my own mind."

Dederick does his drawing from that mental picture and then refines it with the aid of the crime witness.

Sometimes it means adding a mole or scar. Other times it may mean changing a nose or lips.

In the Henry Cowell shooting, the first drawing of the murder suspect depicted a more rugged individual.

"My first impression was that he was more rugged and outdoorsy," said Dederick. "Later, I softened him up a bit."

He and Haertle worked on the drawing — Haertle in his hospital bed and Dederick drawing on the floor.

Haertle could only manage a whisper and had to pull a tube from his throat when he wanted to talk.

"He was really determined to be helpful — to do whatever he could," said Dederick.

The two managed to communicate through gestures and single words.

Dederick did a picture of the murder suspect with a baseball cap and without a cap since witnesses had differed on whether the suspect wore a hat.

Finally, Haertle gave him the sign that the picture was all right.

The picture was ready to go.

Composite drawings are helpful in investigations, but Dederick noted they are still an imprecise science.

"The pictures are pretty general," said Dederick. "I'm not always sure and happy with the drawings but at least it narrows the situation down to a few hundred thousand instead of a million," he said.

Meanwhile, local detectives are in San Francisco continuing their investigation into the background of Carpenter, according to Sheriff's Sgt. Bruce Simpson.

A Marin County newspaper has also reported investigators have a firm link between Carpenter and the killing of a 44-year-old Mill Valley woman on Mount Tamalpais in 1979.

In a copyright story, the San Rafael Independent Journal quoted investigative sources as saying they have a firm link between the killing of Edda Kane 21 months ago and Carpenter.

The paper said the evidence involves a report from a acquaintance of Carpenter who said a pistol similar to the one used to kill Kane was discovered missing from his home shortly before Kane was shot.

She was the first victim of the so-called Trailside Killings which occurred in Marin County.

Investigators later linked five of the seven killings in Marin to the Henry Cowell shootings here.

Kane was not one of those five killings initially linked to the Cowell Park slaying.

The other killing which was not initially tied to the shootings here was that of 23-year-old Barbara Schwartz.

She was stabbed to death on Mount Tamalpais. Later, however, Marin authorities said a pair of glasses found beside Schwartz may have belonged to Carpenter, according to Associated Press reports.