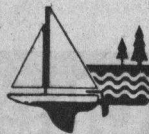


Local



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Defense attacks witness in Carpenter trial

By FELIX GUTIERREZ
The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — A prosecution witness in the trial of Trailside Slaying suspect David Carpenter was called to testify by defense attorneys today as they attacked an account of how one victim allegedly was picked up by Carpenter.

Stanley Howe, a friend of murder victim Heather Scaggs and her boyfriend Daniel Pingle, said Pingle admitted to him that he had "fibbed" about linking a white Lincoln convertible to Carpenter.

Howe said Pingle had claimed he saw Miss Scaggs wave at a white Lincoln the morning she disappeared after telling friends she had accepted an offer from Carpenter to drive to Santa Cruz in search of a better job.

Under questioning by defense attorney Steven Wright, Howe also said he had seen Miss Scaggs emerge from a white Lincoln on a day she claimed she had been given a ride home with Carpenter.

Prosecutors have linked Carpenter to a red Fiat, which witnesses have said they saw being driven away from one of the "Trailside Slayings" murder scenes at Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park near Santa Cruz.

In previous testimony, Pingle admitted that he had told police about the white car but that he was not sure he really saw her wave at the white car.

Howe said Pingle admitted his uncertainty over the white car as they were driving back to San Jose from San Francisco, where they had confronted Carpenter about Miss Scagg's whereabouts when it became apparent she had disappeared.

"I pressed him about it (the white car)," Howe said, because Pingle "really didn't seem sure of himself...I believe he said he saw her wave at a sedan. I'm not saying white."

Carpenter is accused of raping and killing Miss Scaggs, 20. Her body was found in

Big Basin State Park in Santa Cruz County on May 26, 1981, more than three weeks after she disappeared. She told friends on May 2 she planned to meet Carpenter near her San Jose home and drive to Santa Cruz.

He is also being tried for the murder and attempted rape of Ellen Marie Hansen, 20, and the attempted murder of Steven Haertle, then 20, in the Henry Cowell park on March 29, 1981.

Only three or four witnesses will be called to testify in Carpenter's defense, attorney Larry Biggam said Monday, anticipating today's proceedings. The prosecution's case against Carpenter has been presented over a five-week period.

The Santa Cruz charges are being tried in Los Angeles because of pretrial publicity in Northern California. He also faces trial on five charges of murder for the 1980 Marin County trailside deaths of Anne Alderson, 26; Shauna May, 23; Diane O'Connell, 22; Cynthia Moreland, 18; and

Richard Stowers, 19.

The trial has an extraordinary, but not unprecedented, use of separate juries. One will decide the guilt or innocence of Carpenter. If he is convicted, the second panel will decide on a recommendation for life in prison without parole or death in the gas chamber.

Carpenter, 53, spent 17 years in prison on convictions of attempted murder, rape and robbery and kidnapping. He was living in his parent's San Francisco home and working at a Hayward trade school when arrested by police on May 15, 1981.