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Criminal Charge Dropped Against Suspect's Friend

A criminal charge of being an accessory to the murders of a San Francisco Bay Area couple has been dropped against a female companion of murder suspect Royal Kenneth Hayes.

In a letter signed last week and made public on Monday, Assistant District Attorney Madeleine Boriss said she decided not to prosecute Dianne Susan Weller, 31, of Minneapolis, Minn., because Weller was "factually innocent" of all the charges against her.

Weller had been accused of helping Hayes, 44, dispose of the clothing and identification of Lauren deLaet, 36, and Donald MacVicar, 32, whose mutilated bodies were found in a remote area of the UCSC campus in March.

The letter, signed by Boriss and Municipal Court Judge William Kelsay, said, "Whereas it is certainly true she (Weller) assisted in disposing of evidence from the murder, she did so under duress and in fear of Hayes."

Weller has been offered immunity from prosecution in exchange for her testimony against Hayes, the letter says.

The letter also states that Weller passed a polygraph test, showing she did not have any prior knowledge of the impending murders.

Weller did not actually witness the slayings of deLaet and MacVicar, but saw Hayes cut off their heads and hands before covering their bodies with lime and burying them.

Weller had been with Hayes immediately preceding and during the murders, and had lived with

Hayes in Hawaii and Minnesota.

Hayes reportedly worked as a real estate agent in Hawaii in the late 1970s.

While Weller did not actually view the slayings, another female companion of Hayes', Deborah Garcia, 27, Santa Cruz, has told authorities she did assist Hayes in the murders. Garcia has also been offered immunity for her testimony against Hayes.

Garcia led authorities to the bodies after she was assaulted with a pair of scissors by Hayes in a Santa Cruz motel in March, she told police.

The murder weapon and bullets similar to the ones used in the Santa Cruz murders have been recovered, sources close to the case have said.

Based on information obtained in Hayes' hotel room upon his arrest, authorities in Minnesota searched the home of Sondra and James Johnson (who lived near Minneapolis) and discovered the .45-caliber handgun believed to be the murder weapon.

James Johnson had met Hayes in a Minnesota prison when Hayes was serving time for a robbery.

The Johnsons are charged with the murder of a suspected drug dealer in Minnesota. It is believed deLaet and MacVicar were also drug dealers, a source said.

Hayes is facing two counts of first-degree murder, a special