

On the cr Elderly SC man murdered

By MARJ VON B

A connection has emerged between the suspect in the gunshot killing of an elderly Santa Cruz man Tuesday and at least one of the victims in the multiple slayings of two young families in the Santa Cruz area last month.

The young man taken into custody yesterday morning just minutes after he allegedly gunned down Fred A. Perez, 72, was a friend and schoolmate of Jim Gianera, 25, who, with his wife Joan, 21, was found shot to death in their home on Western St. Jan. 25.

The murder suspect, Herbert William Mullin, 25, of Felton, graduated from San Lorenzo Valley High School in Felton with Gianera in 1965.

High school staff members this morning recalled that the two boys were "pretty good friends."

The Gianera killings have, on the basis of ballistics evidence been inextricably tied in with the murders of Mrs. Kathy Francis, 29, and her two sons David, 9, and Daemon, 4.

The bodies of Mrs. Francis and her sons were discovered in their Mystery Spot Road cabin the night of Jan. 24. All the murder victims were shot with the same gun, a "Saturday night special" .22 caliber weapon, according to ballistics findings.

Following the killings, the common-law husband of Mrs. Francis, Robert Clayton Francis, 32, was taken into protective custody for some weeks.

He was out of town at the time his family was slain. During his time in protective custody, investigators said Francis made every effort to recall the name of anyone with whom he was acquainted or had dealings with, in relation to drugs, who might have had information or been responsible for the killings.

Investigators said they talked to numerous persons as a result of Francis' information. According to one source, Mullin was not among those interviewed or questioned by investigators.

Investigators today declined to say whether Francis had been asked, following yesterday's murder, whether he knew Mullin. Francis is no longer being held in protective custody and reportedly is out of the area, but at a location where he can be contacted by investigators.

Despite the possibility Francis may not have known Mullin, there is speculation that Mullin may have been familiar with the Francis cabin because his friend Gianera lived there prior to moving to his newly-built home on Western St.

Investigators are known to be proceeding with this aspect of the case.

Meanwhile, Mullin, according to police, has refused to make any statement and until today refused even to submit to fingerprinting and having his picture taken, the standard booking procedure.

Police say members of Perez' family have

been shown a picture of Mullin and say they have never seen him before and have no idea of whether he had any relationship with Perez.

Also, a canvass of the neighborhood has failed to turn up anyone so far who knew Mullin.

Mullin is suspected of firing the fatal shot at Perez with a .22 rifle from his parked car about 100 feet down the street from where Perez was working in the yard at 523 Lighthouse Ave.

A neighbor heard the shot and stepped out on her porch and saw a car speed away from the scene. She called police immediately and gave them a description of the car, and Mullin was stopped by a patrolman about two miles away. The rifle was found in the car after his arrest.

Mullin was described this morning by his high school counselors as being a "very bright boy."

One of them said, "When he left high school, he was on his way ... he had the world by the tail, and then he apparently got involved with drugs."

The counselor said Mullin had graduated in the top third of his class, "but when I saw him recently he just seemed to have vegetated. I hardly recognized him," said the counselor.

Mullin is expected to be arraigned on a murder charge tomorrow in municipal court in Santa Cruz.