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Murder victim's parents file civil lawsuit against suspect Bandler

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SANTA CRUZ — The parents of a murdered woman have filed a wrongful death lawsuit against suspect Richard Bandler.

Santa Cruz attorney Jim Jackson served the lawsuit on Bandler as Bandler awaited a court hearing Tuesday.

Bandler, 37, the guru of a psychotherapeutic program known as

Neuro-Linguistic Programming, is accused of the shooting death of Corrine Christensen last Nov. 3.

Bandler has been ordered to stand trial Nov. 2 in the killing.

In the civil suit, Christensen's parents, Peter Christensen of San Mateo and Barbara O'Flannagan of Grass Valley, contend Bandler inten-

tionally and negligently killed their daughter. No monetary damage demand was cited in the suit.

"It's significant to me there is no doubt in the parents' mind who is responsible," Assistant District Attorney Gary Fry said of the lawsuit.

But "whodunit" is the big question in others' minds as the trial ap-

proaches. Bandler's attorney, M. Gerald Schwartzbach of San Francisco, contends Fry's key witness — James Marino — pulled the trigger.

Marino testified at a preliminary hearing in April that he was with Bandler and saw him put the gun to Christensen's head. Schwartzbach called the testimony "lies."

After hearing the evidence, Mu-

nicipal Court Judge Tom Kelly ruled there was sufficient reason to suspect Bandler of the crime. But, he noted, the burden of proof at a preliminary hearing is much less than the "beyond a reasonable doubt" standard of a trial.

Kelly said he would have had to acquit Bandler based on the evidence presented if he had been required to

apply the trial standard.

"The only thing I know beyond a reasonable doubt is that the murderer was here in this courtroom," Kelly said.

Fry contends he has additional evidence which he will present when the trial begins to corroborate his theory that Bandler pulled the trigger.