

# Bandler confessed, witness alleges

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SANTA CRUZ — Richard Bandler's girlfriend said Bandler confessed to murder, the woman's ex-husband testified Wednesday.

The woman, Paula McFarland, also took the witness stand Wednesday in Bandler's murder trial. She denied that Bandler admitted killing Corine Christensen.

McFarland's ex-husband, Michael Allison III, said that McFarland called him about two months after the murder and said she was afraid. She said Bandler had confessed to her that he had killed Christensen, Allison testified.

Allison later told authorities about the confession. But he said he denied doing so to

McFarland, saying he feared she would not let him see their two children if she knew he'd told police.

McFarland, he said, later called him and asked him to call Bandler, Bandler's attorney and the attorney's investigator to discuss what someone had been saying to police. Allison said he called Bandler and denied having talked to police about a confession.

Allison said he called Bandler's "beeper number" and left his number. Bandler, he said, returned the call and said "somebody's been talking to the cops." Allison said Bandler told him not to cooperate with authorities. Allison said he assured Bandler he had not told them of the confession.

Again, he said, he lied because he was afraid McFarland would keep the children from him if she knew.

Allison said he came back to California from Pennsylvania "because somebody's dead here. My affections are simple for my children, but we're talking something that involves society here. I'm obligated," Allison said.

Allison squirmed in the witness stand, tearing a tissue he'd been holding in his hand to shreds as he spoke. He said he was nervous and scared.

Defense attorney M. Gerald Schwartzbach questioned Allison's motives.

Allison conceded that he has spent most of his adult life "not participating in society," but

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reiterated that he felt a sense of obligation in a murder case.

"You got a free ride to California to testify, didn't you?" Schwartzbach asked.

"I was willing to testify, but not to pay my way," Allison answered.

"Your commitment to society ended at the bank, huh?" Schwartzbach shot back.

Allison says there is no bank in his life. "My finances have been shaky at best for 20 years," he said.

Allison said he lives in a house with five other people in Philadelphia and operates a painting business with two other men. He could only identify one by a first name and the other by a last name.

Schwartzbach also asked why, if Allison believed Bandler to be a murderer, he chose to call him, instead of Schwartzbach or the investigator when McFarland gave him the three numbers.

Allison said he "didn't know the other two."

Allison denied on cross-examination that he told authorities about a confession as a way of hurting McFarland because he is jealous of her relationship with Bandler.

He did admit, however, that he once called McFarland's parents in anger and told them she had been killed in an automobile accident. "I was drunk. That was 15 years ago," Allison said.

McFarland testified Wednesday that Bandler never confessed to her.

McFarland came into court crying. Guidelines for her testimony were set in Judge Chris Cottle's chambers, with McFarland's attorney present.

McFarland admitted lying to sheriff's deputies when they came to arrest Bandler the afternoon of the murder. She said she made up an alibi for

Bandler because she was scared and didn't know what was happening.

"They said they were there to arrest Richard for murder. I was totally shocked," McFarland said.

She said she later told investigators the truth, that Bandler had not been with her at the time of the killing, early on the morning of Nov. 3.

She testified that Bandler and James Marino had come to her Capitola home about 6:30 that morning. Marino later left with her brother-in-law, she said.

McFarland said she and Bandler spent most of the day in bed, talking and snorting cocaine. Bandler said nothing about murder, she testified.

Deputies stormed in with guns drawn about 7 p.m., she said.

Prosecutor Gary Fry rested his case Wednesday afternoon. Before the big testimony of the day about the alleged confession, crime scene investigator Bob Tanner took the stand to corroborate a key portion of the prosecution star witness' testimony.

That witness — Marino — testified earlier in the trial that Bandler pulled a gun as soon as he and Bandler entered Christensen's townhouse the morning of the murder. Marino said Bandler announced that the three were not going to leave alive.

Marino said he feared he'd be killed to so he tried to escape, first from an upstairs window and then through the garage. All exits were locked, he said.

Investigator Tanner said he found all of the upstairs windows locked and the garage door inoperable from the inside of the garage at Christensen's townhouse.

The defense opened its case late Wednesday with a woman who once rented a home owned by

Marino. Colleen Dunaway said she saw Marino twice with guns. Once, she said, Marino came banging on her door with a gun, "asking me if I'd seen them." She said he showed her another gun one day when he returned home from a face-lift operation.

Marino had testified he never possessed a gun. Dunaway said Marino told her that Christensen had stolen \$10,000 from him and that he had a plan to get Christensen and Bandler.

Dunaway said Marino also told her that he had shot someone in the past and had gotten away with it.

Schwartzbach contends that Marino murdered Christensen and has lied to save his skin.

Schwartzbach said Bandler will testify later in the trial.