

Trailside Murders

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Carpenter Lawyer To Seek Two Trials

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Defense attorneys are expected to ask that trailside killer suspect David Joseph Carpenter be tried separately for the shooting attack of two UC Davis students and the murder of a young San Jose woman when pretrial motions in the case begin May 10.

A hearing on the motion and a variety of other pretrial moves had been scheduled to be heard today in Superior Court.

District Attorney Art Danner won a continuance in the hearing, however, saying some witnesses in the case were not available for testimony this week.

Superior Court Judge Chris Cottle set a new

hearing date for May 10.

Carpenter, a balding San Francisco printer, was arrested last May in connection with the murder of Ellen Hansen and the attempted murder of her companion, Steven Haertle, both 20. The two were shot in March as they hiked on a popular trail in Henry Cowell Park.

He is also charged with the murder of Heather Scaggs, 20, a co-worker who disappeared after an appointment with Carpenter. Her body was later found on a secluded trail in Big Basin State Park.

She had been shot in the head.

This morning, defense attorney Larry Biggam said he plans to ask that Carpenter be tried separately for the Henry Cowell Park shootings and the death of Scaggs.

Danner is expected to challenge that motion. He has asked that the two cases be tried together.

Other motions in the case are expected to include a move to challenge the police lineup in which witnesses are believed to have identified Carpenter, and request to suppress some evidence found as a result of search warrants, according to Biggam.

A motion to dismiss the murder charges because of lack of sufficient evidence is also planned to be heard beginning May 10. The motion is a standard one filed by many defense attorneys.

The motions hearing is expected to last about one week. A gag order on the case remains in effect.