

# 17-year-old charged with Capitola Mall murder

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STAFF WRITER

A teenager has been arrested on charges of robbing and beating to death 78-year-old Emily Shaw in the Capitola Mall parking lot in August.

Capitola police and District Attorney Art Danner held a news conference last night to announce the arrest of Christopher McCarthy, 17, a former Soquel High School student who has more recently been enrolled in an alternative high school education pro-

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She died two hours later at Dominican Santa Cruz Hospital of a fractured skull. Police said she was beaten with an 18-inch log, which was found near her car.

One couple reported seeing a well-dressed, clean-cut young white man trying to put Shaw into the back seat of the Honda. They spoke to him briefly, and he told them nothing was wrong. They circled the parking lot, found Shaw alone and unconscious, and called

gram.

Danner said that at the time of the murder, McCarthy lived just outside Capitola city limits — within quick walking or running distance from the mall. He now lives in Santa Cruz, Danner said. His parents also live in the area, Danner said.

The investigation is continuing, and police were vague about McCarthy's alleged connection to the crime. They said a number of statements by witnesses and some physical evidence led them to

Police distributed drawings of the suspect for several days, and other witnesses later came forward to say they had seen a man fitting the suspect's description hanging around the parking lot hours earlier.

The man was also seen fleeing on foot into the residential area west of the new parking lot where the murder took place.

McCarthy. Capitola police said the teenager doesn't have a police record.

Danner said investigators believe McCarthy approached Shaw with the intention of robbing her. Her purse, which has been missing since her murder, was found today by investigators "in an area consistent with the escape from the mall," Danner said.

There was no money in the purse, but otherwise nothing seemed to be missing from it, Danner said.

Danner said that recently investigators began re-examining some of the hundreds of tips and other evidence they had amassed in the case.

"When they did that, this individual came into focus again," he said.

Last week, investigators called a news conference in which they announced a \$11,000 reward for information leading to the killer. At the time investigators also released an FBI profile of the killer, which theorized that he was an

unsophisticated criminal, possibly a person under stress in his personal life, and that he may have told someone close to him about what he did.

After the renewed press attention, Danner said, "a whole number of tips came in, and one was that this was the guy who did it."

Neither Danner nor a Capitola Police spokesman knew if anyone would collect the reward as a result of the arrest.

The district attorney's office will

ask the Juvenile Court judge who hears the case to transfer it to Superior Court, where McCarthy would be arraigned and tried as an adult.

If McCarthy is convicted in Superior Court, Danner said, the maximum penalty would be life in prison without the possibility of parole.

Emily Shaw was found unconscious in the back seat of her Honda Civic Aug. 27 at 3:15 p.m.

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WATSONVILLE REGISTER-PAJARONIAN  
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REFERENCE

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