

# 'College bandit' suspects face trial

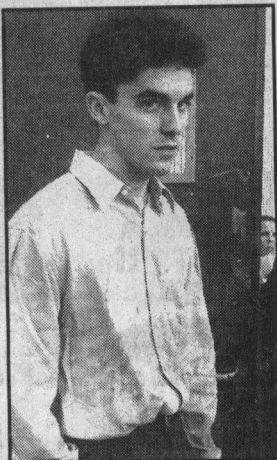
*Crime & Criminals - 1990*  
Sentinel staff report

SANTA CRUZ — Lawyers for the three suspects in the "college bandit" armed robberies made a strategic decision Friday to waive their rights to a preliminary hearing and head straight to trial.

Felony defendants are entitled to a preliminary hearing, in which prosecutors must prove that enough evidence exists to justify a trial. If a judge rules the prosecution has not met that burden, charges are dismissed.

The defense lawyers would not comment on their reasons for forgoing the hearing that had been scheduled for Friday afternoon.

Emma Rose Freeman, 18, and Anthony Cristofani, 23, are accused of the armed robberies of a Capitola hair salon on Jan. 16 and the Santa Cruz Costco store on Jan. 21 while both were



**Anthony Cristofani**

students at UC Santa Cruz.

In both heists, police allege Freeman carried a Beretta .380-caliber semiautomatic handgun belonging to Cristofani. Police also contend Freeman committed the crimes to support her artistic lifestyle rather than work.

Their friend Craig Dickson, an elementary

school teachers' aide, allegedly drove the getaway car.

All three are free on bail.

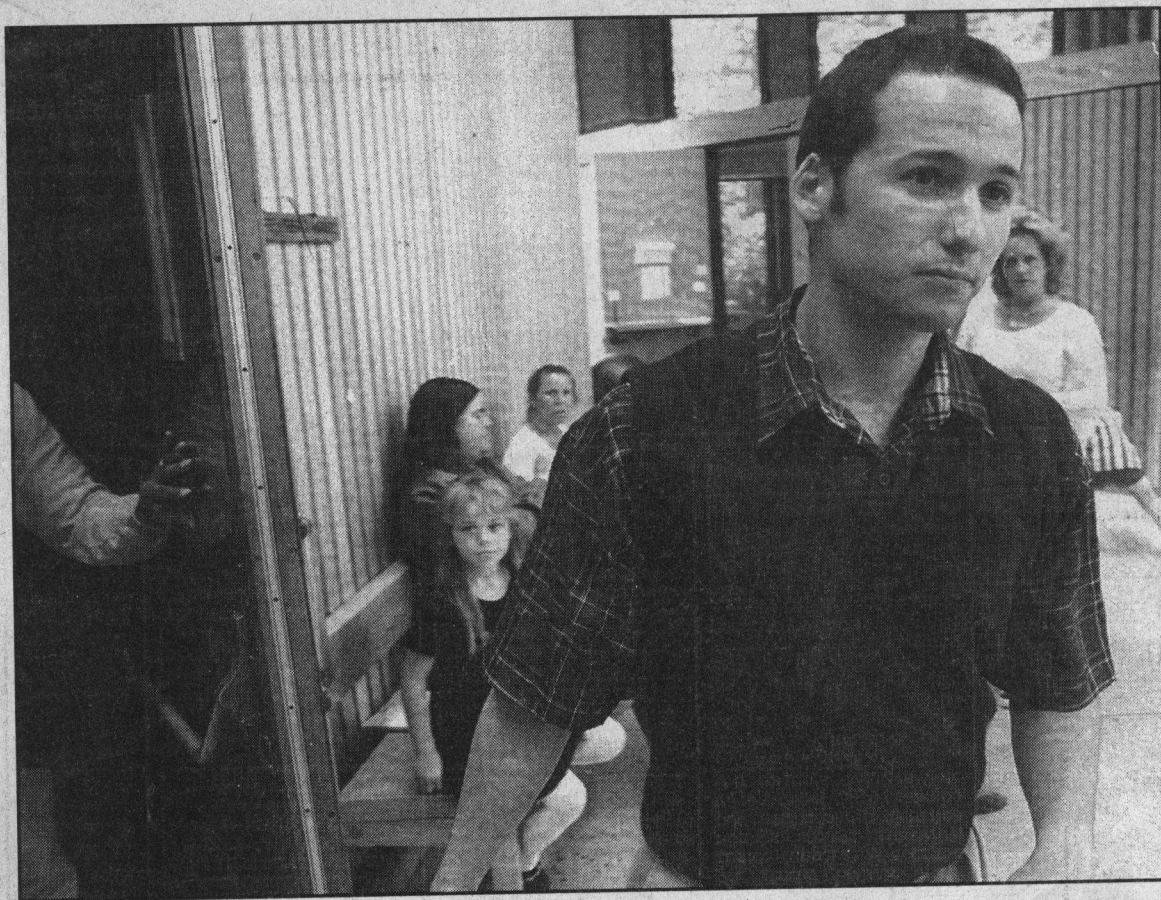
Because of the college connection and the suspects' middle-class backgrounds, their arrests sparked national publicity.

Freeman is a National Merit Scholar who friends have called a thrill-seeker. She was a UCSC freshman at the time, but campus spokeswoman Liz Irwin said her enrollment ended Jan. 23, two days after the Costco holdup.

Freeman appeared in court Friday with her father and defense lawyer Bill Minkner.

Cristofani, a philosophy major, remains enrolled, said Irwin. His attorney, Paul Meltzer, said Cristofani is working and not attending classes.

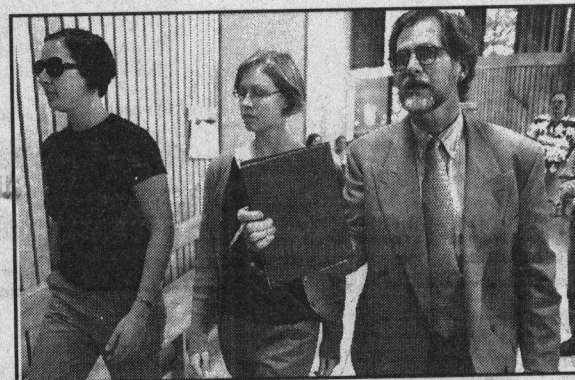
Their trial date has not been scheduled but they are set for an initial appearance in Superior Court on June 28.



Bill Lovejoy/Sentinel photos

Craig Dickson, charged with driving the alleged getaway car in two robberies, leaves court on Friday after waiving his preliminary hearing.

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Robbery defendant Emma Freeman, center, a former UCSC student, leaves court with a friend and her lawyer, Bill Minkner, on Friday.