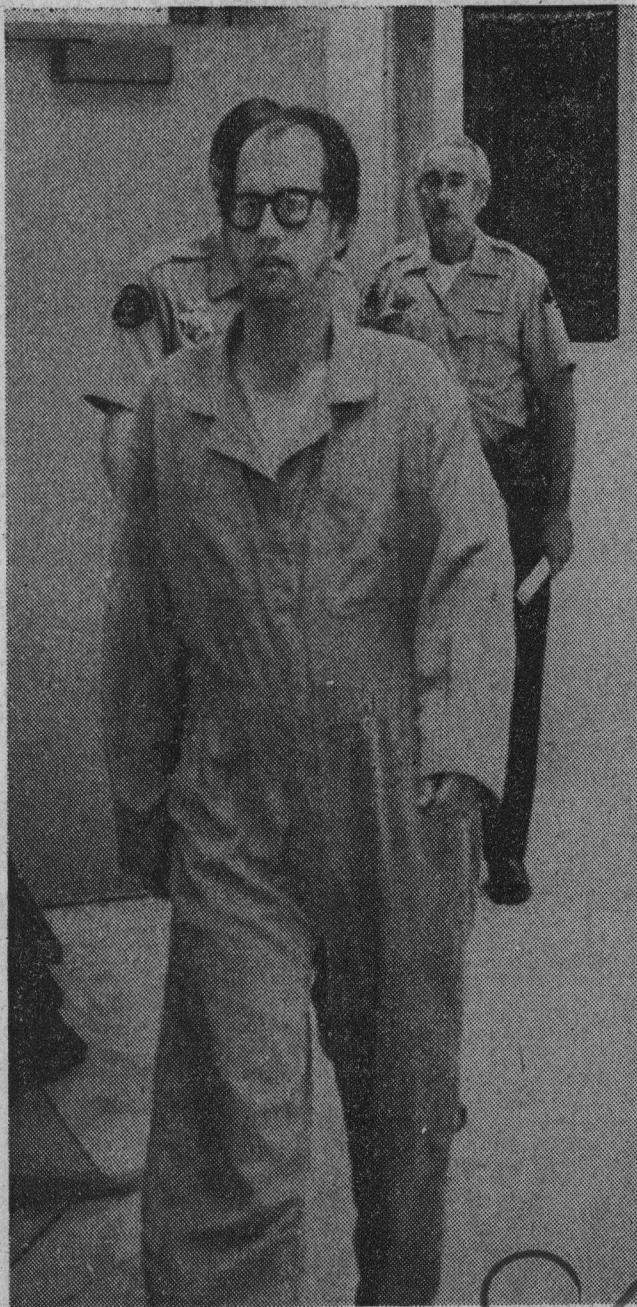


Crime & Criminals



Busnap suspect Thomas Benton Wilson arrives in court Friday for arraignment on charges of kidnaping and Grand theft auto. Wilson held 63 hostages at the Baha'i school Wednesday after hijacking a bus in Santa Cruz. (Photo by The Sentinel's Neil Hanshaw)

Wilson In Court Tuesday

Thomas Benton Wilson, who held 63 persons hostage at a religious retreat in Bonny Doon, is scheduled to appear in court Tuesday to enter a plea to 53 felony charges, including kidnaping, false imprisonment and grand theft.

Looking slightly ill at ease, Wilson appeared in court Friday afternoon for his arraignment.

He was handed a formal complaint charging him with 47 counts of false imprisonment, five counts of kidnaping and one count of grand theft.

A special allegation of using a firearm during commission of the crimes has also been added.

His attorney, John Bohrer, asked for a continuance to enter a plea in the case.

Wilson spoke only once during the brief proceeding to answer "yes" when Municipal Court Judge Richard Kessell asked if he wanted Bohrer, a public defender, to continue as his attorney.

Wilson sat stiffly as news photographers and cameramen took his picture before the court hearing. His hair appeared rumpled and he looked unshaven.

Wilson was arrested Wednesday night after he hijacked a city bus and forced the driver to take him and four passengers to the Baha'i religious retreat.

There, he took 63 persons hostage, then released them group-by-group until only five remained.

He surrendered after about six hours.