

DA's book focuses on 'bizarre' sex case

By MARK BERGSTROM
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SANTA CRUZ — "Perfect Victim," Assistant District Attorney Christine McGuire's true story about prosecuting one of America's most unbelievable sex cases, is now on the shelves of local bookstores.

Co-authored by Capitola journalist Carla Norton, the book tells the story of Colleen Stan, a young woman who was kidnapped and kept as a sex slave — living seven years in a coffin-like box under a depraved man's waterbed.

Stan was just 20 when she accepted a ride from Cameron Hooker, a Red Bluff millworker, and his wife. The pair pulled up as Stan hitchhiked along Interstate 5 in the Central Valley.

That ride led Stan on a trip of physical and mental torture so bizarre that convincing a jury such crimes could occur would be difficult.

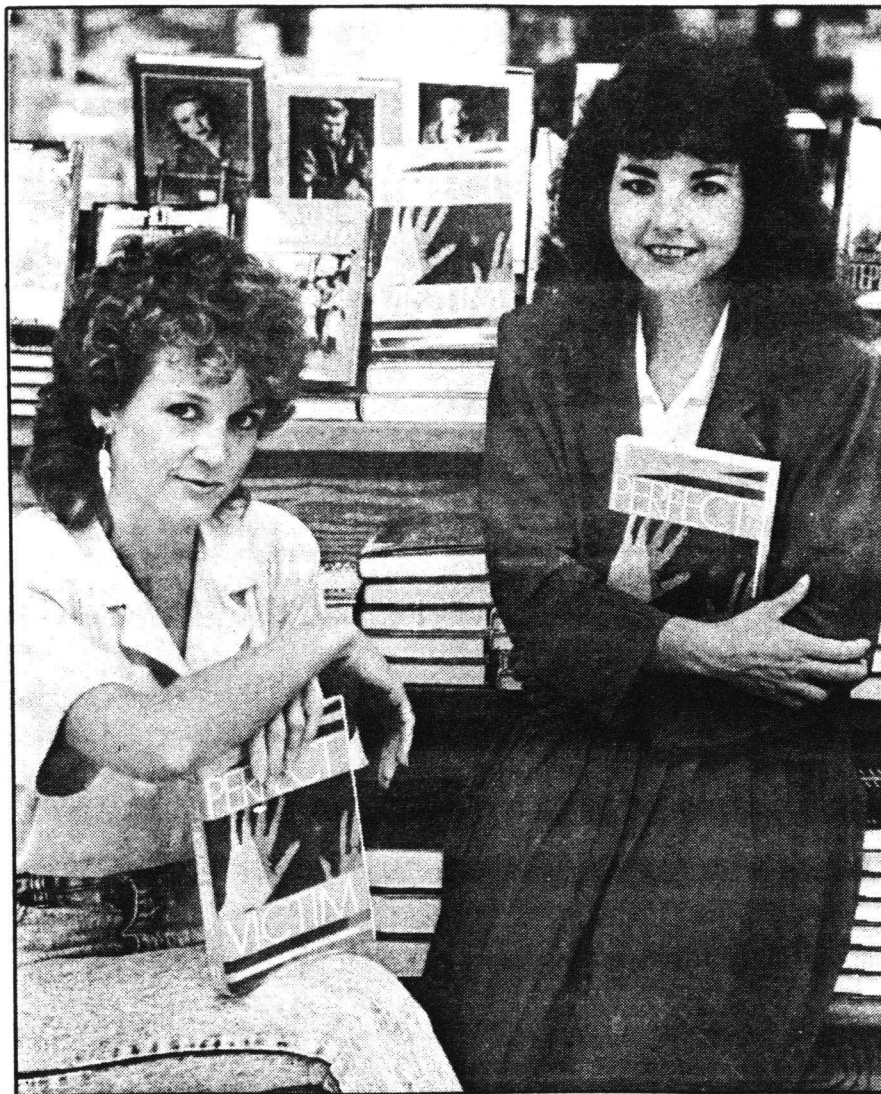
Hooker dominated her so completely that Stan eventually got a job outside the home and even returned to Southern California to visit her family, yet returned to sleep in her box under the bed.

The book alternately focuses on Stan's imprisonment and the efforts by McGuire, then a young deputy district attorney in Tehama County, to bring Hooker to justice.

Explaining to a jury why Stan did not use her chances to escape was difficult enough. But in the middle of the trial, Hooker's attorney dropped a bombshell.

While cross-examining Stan, Rolland Papendick dropped a stack of letters on the prosecution table.

They were love letters Stan had written to Hooker after gaining her freedom. McGuire fought for composure. She couldn't show her shock until she was



Dan Coyro/Sentinel

Carla Norton, left, collaborated with Assistant District Attorney Christine McGuire on the book.

alone that night — out of sight of the jury.

But then she picked up a pen and began underlining a word that kept reappearing in those letters. "It's not easy being a *slave* ...," Stan said in one letter. "Sometimes I feel that being your *slave* has made me more of a woman," Stan started another note.

The book tells how McGuire was able to turn those letters to her advantage.

Hooker was convicted and is serving a 104-year term at Folsom State Prison.

She topped that score last year when she won a 140-year conviction in Santa Cruz' so-called Pleasure Point Rapist case.

McGuire and Norton, who is a special-projects writer for the San Jose Mercury News, spent the last three years writing "Perfect Victim," which has been published by William Morrow & Co.

Last month, the book won a star from "Kirkus Reviews," which called it "one of the most gripping true-crime books of the year."

Kirkus, which reviews books for bookstores and libraries, praised the authors for their restraint in handling the sex aspects of the book.

"Carla and I had an unspoken ground rule. We weren't going to take advantage of the sexual aspects to try to sell a book," McGuire said.

"We felt there was enough of a story, anyway," McGuire said.

First orders of the book are now hitting bookstores across the country.

McGuire is scheduled for an eight-city tour, starting July 18 in Los Angeles. She also will visit, Seattle, New York, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Minneapolis and San Francisco.

A local appearance is planned Aug. 6 at Bookshop Santa Cruz.