

Jealousy linked to student's murder

ORINDA, Calif. (AP) — In the eyes of her teen-age classmates, Kirsten Costas had it all — she was a varsity cheerleader and athlete, someone always surrounded by friends.

That prized popularity may have been the motive for Kirsten's murder, perhaps at the hand of a jealous classmate, her father and several students have suggested.

Breaking a 2½-month silence, Kirsten's parents, Arthur and Barit Costas, talked to reporters Tuesday and again yesterday to discuss their 15-year-old daughter's June 23 stabbing death at the hands of a teen-age girl described by witnesses as a chunky blonde.

"I feel a group of girls was involved ... to set this up," said Costas. "Then it got out of hand."

Referring to his daughter's place on the cheerleading squad and her being picked for the Bob-O-Links, or Bobbies, an exclusive volunteer hospital auxiliary, Costas said, "I don't know if (the motive) was jealousy or anti-establishment. Kirsten may have represented the establishment."

But, he said, "There is no doubt in my mind that someone is covering up ... because of the way it came about. The planning, the way they set us up. They got Kirsten out of the house. They had to know the area, they had to know Kirsten."

The cover-up, he said, is by someone who must have noticed strange behavior by the killer and who hasn't reported it.

"It's my speculation, and a lot of other people's, I guess, that it emanated out of this area. And how could anyone do something like that and even be a part of the planning of it

and not react in some way?" Costas said he and his wife decided to talk to reporters because of the possibility that the killer may be at school in this suburb of San Francisco.

"Everyone thinks that the suspect is ... on campus," said one 15-year-old classmate of Kirsten's at Miramonte High School who spoke only on condition she not be identified. "It has to be a student."

"Some of the girls were afraid to come back to school this year," added Grant Weaver, a 15-year-old sophomore.

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— Arthur Costas, father of murdered 15-year-old

Sheriff's deputies said a number of teen-age students were questioned, including two who were given lie detector tests.

"Two or three girls will in fact transfer to other schools because of the harassment they've suffered in their community," said Sheriff's Sgt. George Ward. He said all those questioned have been cleared.

"I feel sorry for all the blond girls who got their hair cut short," said one 16-year-old student who did not want

to be identified. "We all fit the description."

Steve Jones, 17, said one blond student in particular has roused the suspicion of her fellow students, even though she was cleared by the authorities.

"Everyone was almost positive she did it," Jones said. "She didn't like Kirsten, but she didn't hate her enough to kill her. Now everywhere she goes, people are going to look at her."

According to authorities, on Thursday, June 21, Mrs. Costas received a phone call from a girl who said she would pick Kirsten up Saturday to go to an initiation for the Bobbies.

Kirsten was alone at the house when she was picked up, but neighbors told Contra Costa sheriff's deputies someone honked a car horn about 9 p.m. on Saturday and Kirsten got into the car.

About an hour later, deputies said, Kirsten appeared at a house in nearby Moraga asking to use the telephone to call her parents because her friend was "acting weird." Her parents were not home, and so a man in the house offered to drive her to her neighbor's house.

But a teen-age driver followed the car, and when Kirsten got to her neighbor's front porch, the girl got out of her own car, slashed Kirsten several times and then fled in what was described as a gold or mustard-colored Ford Pinto.

The man who had driven Kirsten to the neighbor's witnessed the killing.

Police Capt. Stan Garvin said yesterday the Costas' hypothesis that the killing was sparked by envy is a possible scenario, "but we don't have evidence to indicate that."

USG group may change its bylaws

The Undergraduate Student Government's Academic Assembly last night discussed a resolution to change the USG bylaws to allow senators and representatives to hold more than one position within USG.

The present wording of the bylaws prohibits them from performing any other duties. If the resolution is passed, a senator or representative will only be prohibited from holding a position within the judiciary branch of USG.

The resolution will be voted on at the next assembly meeting.

Also at the meeting, Thomas Thompson, Academic Assembly president, said in order for members of the assembly to accomplish their goals, they must have a sense of belonging to the group, and must cooperate and help each other.

The assembly will attend a retreat next Wednesday evening so members can become acquainted with each other. Thompson said they will discuss and analyze goals and set priorities at that time.

In other business, the assembly discussed a tentative proposal from the Alumni Association to establish "Distinguished Teaching Awards." The awards would allow students to recognize outstanding teachers.

—by Kim Bower



Begging bearcat

Bo the binturong, commonly known as a bearcat, mooches a banana from keeper Mike Dulany at the Cincinnati Zoo. Bo will be a mascot at some of the University of Cincinnati's football games this year.

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