

Killings work of Zodiac?

Similarities found in Mt. Tam slayings

By Jennifer Foote
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Police are investigating the possibility that the Mount Tamalpais and Point Reyes killer, and the man who shot to death another woman hiker near Santa Cruz last week, could be the Bay Area's most notorious and long-silent killer — the Zodiac.

A team of detectives from the Santa Cruz County and Marin County sheriff's departments is "definitely looking into" the connection, according to Santa Cruz Sheriff's Sgt. Bruce Simpson.

He said the most striking similarities are in composite sketches drawn from witnesses' recollections 11 years apart.

Since the Santa Cruz sketch was issued last week, citizens and even police officers who were involved in the hunt for the boastful Zodiac killer have been calling police to point out the similarities.

The resemblance is uncanny. The facial features, the glasses, the height and the age all appear to match, Simpson said.

The composite of the Zodiac issued by San Francisco police in 1969 describes a crew-cut, bespectacled, slightly obese killer, 5-feet-8, aged between 35 and 45.

The Santa Cruz suspect is described as 45 to 50 years old with thinning gray hair, about 5-feet-9, hazel eyes with horn-rimmed glasses and crooked, yellow teeth.

Steve Haertle, 20, who survived a shot in the neck while hiking in Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park with his slain companion, Ellen Hansen, a 20-year-old UC-Davis sophomore, was also able to describe to detectives the killer's clothes.

He wore a yellow-orange windbreaker with "Olympic Drinking

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