

CONNECTICUT

# Murder Trial Relocation Sought

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NEWLONDON — Citing extensive pretrial publicity, attorneys for murder-for-hire suspect Beth Ann Carpenter said Tuesday that they will ask again to move her coming trial out of New London County.

The defense attorneys will seek a change of venue because 48 percent of the potential jurors said in court Tuesday that they knew one or more potential witnesses.

"It's a staggering percentage," said Hugh Keefe, one of Carpenter's attorneys. "That proves this case should not be tried in this little town."

The case involving adultery, cocaine, money and murder has been one of the most publicized in Connecticut in recent years. When jury selection started Tuesday, 36 of the 75 potential jurors

told the judge that they had some familiarity with at least one of the witnesses mentioned by the prosecution and defense.

Keefe also noted to the judge that he did not see any members of minority groups in the jury pool. While Keefe's co-counsel Tara Knight did not formally file a motion to move the trial to another courthouse, she told Judge Robert Devlin that the motion will be made in the coming days.

State's Attorney Kevin Kane, the county's chief prosecutor, declined to comment when asked by the judge for his response regarding the potential move to another courthouse.

The prosecution opposed a similar motion, made last year, after Keefe submitted more than 300 newspaper articles, radio news transcripts and television videotapes regarding the case in recent years. Another judge, who

is not handling the trial, rejected the motion and said the matter should be tried in New London.

Carpenter, a 37-year-old attorney, is facing life in prison on charges of murder, capital felony and conspiracy to commit murder in the 1994 shooting death of her brother-in-law, Anson "Buzz" Clinton III of East Lyme. Carpenter is charged with conspiring with her law partner and lover, Haiman Long Clein, to pay \$10,000 to a hit man to kill Clinton. Both Clein and the shooter, Mark J. Depres, have pleaded guilty to murder in the case.

Police and the prosecution say that Carpenter sought the murder

because she believed Clinton was molesting her 3-year-old niece.

Ever since the shooting, Clinton's mother, Dee, has been a fixture at the courthouse — attending virtually every session related to the case. She took center stage Tuesday when Keefe asked the judge to prevent her from wearing her ever-present button bearing the name of the group Survivors of Homicide Inc.

To ensure a fair trial, the judge ruled that Clinton and anyone else involved in the case cannot bring buttons, banners, signs or leaflets into the court.

No jurors were selected Tuesday.

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