

Lawyers seeking change of venue

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recognition" when asked if they had ever heard or read about someone named Beth Carpenter. Four percent of those surveyed in the Bridgeport area have such recognition.

Barnes characterized that difference as "statistically significant."

When those who knew the name were asked what they knew about her, 46 percent of those surveyed in the New London area said she was "involved in murder." In the Bridgeport area, 6 percent gave the same response.

Such survey results, Keefe and Knight are hoping, will help persuade Superior Court Judge Susan Handy to transfer the case elsewhere. The defense lawyers contend that extensive media coverage of the murder and those allegedly involved has made it difficult and unlikely that an impartial jury can be seated in New London. They also contend that once Carpenter's trial begins, media coverage will intensify, increasing the likelihood that local talk will intensify.

"How do you insulate jurors who live in this area from that without sequestering them?" Keefe asked.

Cross-examining Barnes, Assistant State's Attorney Paul Murray brought out that 79 percent, "or nearly eight out of 10" of the New London area people surveyed had "an open mind" about Carpenter's guilt or innocence.

Clinton was found shot to death on the Rocky Neck Connector off Interstate 95 in March 1994. Carpenter's former lover and law partner, Haiman Clein, and the alleged triggerman, Mark Depres, have pleaded guilty to charges in the case, but will not be sentenced until they've offered their testimony against Carpenter at trial.

The hearing on the motion continues today, when defense attorneys will offer articles and editorials about the case that have appeared in area newspapers.

Survey claims Carpenter trial should move

By Cynthia Baran
Shoreline Bureau Chief

NEW LONDON — A survey commissioned by attorneys for Beth Carpenter shows significantly more people in the New London Judicial District than the Bridgeport Judicial District are aware of her criminal case.

Carpenter's lawyers, Hugh F. Keefe and Tara Knight of New Haven, are using the survey results as part of the evidence in their motion to get her trial for capital felony murder transferred to another courthouse in the state.

Carpenter, 36, a lawyer who had an office in Old Saybrook, is accused of initiating a murder-for-hire of her brother-in-law, Anson "Buzz" Clinton, whom she allegedly deemed an unfit stepfather to her niece.

The survey of some 800 persons (400 in the New London area, 400 in the Bridgeport area) was performed by the Center for Survey Research and Analysis at the University of Connecticut at Storrs, otherwise known as UConn's polling arm.

Tuesday, the center's associate director, Christopher Barnes, said 20 percent of those surveyed in the New London area had "top of mind

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