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Judge Reduces Murder Suspect's Bond

By GARY LIBOW
The Hartford Courant

November 07, 2000

NEW LONDON - A Superior Court judge Monday significantly reduced murder-for-hire suspect Beth Ann Carpenter's \$1 million bond, a decision that is likely to result in her release from prison within days.

The \$150,000 surety bond was set after her two special public defenders voluntarily stepped down.

Prosecutors last month filed a motion to dismiss defense attorney Hugh Keefe, based on the probability he will be called as a witness during the murder case.

Before Carpenter, 36, was charged with capital felony, murder and conspiracy in the 1994 fatal shooting of Anson "Buzz" Clinton, her brother-in-law, she received legal advice from Keefe, who visited her in London and Ireland. Carpenter had been living in Europe since 1995, was arrested in Dublin in 1997 and extradited to the United States in 1999.

Later in 1999, a motion to have her bond reduced was denied after the state argued she was a flight risk.

Carpenter is accused of conspiring with her former lover and law partner, Haiman Clein, to hire a hit man to kill Clinton, whom she suspected was abusing her then 3-year-old niece. According to police, the plot was carried out March 10, 1994, when Mark Depres, Clein's drug dealer, lured the 28-year-old Clinton to a road off I-95 and shot him five times in the chest. Depres was paid \$10,000.

Co-defense counsel Tara L. Knight also stepped



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down Monday. Keefe said he had asked high-profile Hartford lawyer Hubert Santos to take over and expected an answer Tuesday.

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Keefe said his decision to step down was made after realizing that his role as a prospective witness in the trial had grown larger than he anticipated. After again reviewing his files, Keefe said he decided not to oppose the state's motion.

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Had Keefe been allowed to remain, jury selection was scheduled for Nov. 14, with the trial scheduled to begin Jan. 2. Carpenter is being held at York Correctional Center in Niantic.

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Judge Stuart Schimelman said it would be unfair to keep Carpenter jailed during what is expected to be a lengthy delay. He set the new bond on condition that she is only permitted to leave her parent's Ledyard home for a serious medical emergency and that she wear electronic monitoring.

Should she attempt to flee, the equities in the homes of her parents, her brother in Massachusetts and her grandmother in South Windsor - constituting the surety bond - would be forfeit.

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Dee Clinton, the victim's mother, opposed Carpenter's release.

Noting the Clinton family has waited years for the case to be tried, Dee Clinton told the judge the state should continue to hold her. Fearing Carpenter will flee, Dee Clinton offered to let Carpenter spend the house arrest with her.

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The judge, calling the withdrawal of a defense attorney to facilitate his appearance as a witness most unusual, noted the serious offense for which Carpenter is charged. Schimelman ordered that Carpenter's passport and the passports of her family be surrendered to the clerk of the court.

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Schimelman ruled that Carpenter will not be released until the surety bond is filed and until a hearing is held to determine that each condition of release has been met.