

Court Upholds Ex-Cop's Murder Conviction

Ken Hoover, Chronicle Staff Writer

Friday, November 22, 1996

A state appeals court yesterday upheld the murder conviction of a former Oakland police officer found guilty of slaying his wife.

The former officer, Keith Carlen, contended his attorney acted incompetently because he waited until the trial started to obtain a medical evaluation on whether the officer had suffered permanent brain damage as the result of a 1979 motorcycle accident.

Another lawyer who handled the appeal argued that better-prepared testimony about the accident's effects on Carlen could have persuaded a jury to return a manslaughter verdict instead of a first-degree murder verdict.

Carlen was accused of killing his wife, Carol, at the couple's Alameda home on April 13, 1992. He had told a colleague while leaving work for the day that he intended to go to the police association office to finish writing a piece for the association's publication Call Box.

Instead, according to testimony at the trial, he parked his truck at a Payless store, took a cab home wearing a wig and a false mustache and strangled his wife with a scarf.

He then put her body in the trunk of her car, drove to the Payless and spray-painted the word "war" on the side, circling the police association sticker in an attempt to make it look like drug dealers murdered her as part of an anti-police drug war.

Later, investigators found that the officer's shoes and the clothing bore tiny traces of orange spray-paint matching that on the side of the car. When confronted with the evidence against him, he confessed, saying that his mind snapped.

<http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/1996/11/22/MN49825.DTL>

This article appeared on page **A - 27** of the San Francisco Chronicle

© 2011 Hearst Communications Inc. | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Feedback](#) | [RSS Feeds](#) | [FAQ](#) | [Site Index](#) | [Contact](#)

