



**SANTA CRUZ POLICE DEPARTMENT**

155 Center Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**DATE/TIME:** April 28, 2011

**LOCATION:** 1104 E. Cliff Drive

**TOPIC:** Death Investigation Update

**CASE NUMBER:** 11S-03370

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**SUSPECTS:**

1. John Clauer – 63 yrs, Santa Cruz Resident

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**INFORMATION:**

The Santa Cruz Police Department is now classifying this death investigation as a homicide. The victim is identified as Heather Stearns, a 30 year old resident of Santa Cruz.

An autopsy has now been completed by the Medical Examiner. The autopsy determined the victim died after sustaining significant physical trauma and not as a result of any natural or accidental causes. Information obtained in the investigation shows Mr. Clauer continued to live in the apartment for more than a week with the decomposing body of the victim. Mr. Clauer is considered a suspect in this case and remains in custody on a parole violation. Charges have not been filed against him in connection with the homicide as the case is still under investigation.

Detectives are continuing with the investigation, collecting additional evidence and detailed statements from witnesses. Detectives also met with the District Attorney's office to discuss the case and the direction of the investigation. The District Attorney's Office will make the final determination on the filing of charges in regards to Mr. Clauer.

**Background**

On April 26, 2011, at approximately 7:10 PM, the Santa Cruz Police Department responded to a report of suspicious activity at an apartment in the 1100 block of E. Cliff Drive. The original reports indicated an unusual smell was coming from an apartment. Responding officers discovered the decomposing body of a 30 year old female in the apartment along with the suspect John Clauer. Due to the state of decomposition, it was clear that the body had been in the apartment for several days.

For additional information, contact: Deputy Chief Steve Clark

Phone: (831) 420-5815

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To Leave ANONYMOUS information regarding this incident, please call our TIP LINE (831) 420-5995

