

Man is charged in 2 girls' kidnapping

By TINA MAY
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SAN BERNARDINO — A Cedar Ridge, Calif., man was charged here Wednesday with accessory to kidnapping and felony child concealment in connection with the 1977 kidnapping of two young sisters.

Bail for Lee Allan Casner, 37, was set at \$100,000. The complaint against him was signed late Wednesday by Municipal Court Judge John B. Lawrence. Casner will be arraigned in Municipal Court today at which time a preliminary hearing will be set.

He was arrested last Friday following questioning at the Nevada County Sheriff's Department, about 50 miles northeast of Sacramento. He and his sister-in-law, Vivian Casner, who was also arrested, were brought here Monday by San Bernardino detectives and jailed.

The investigators were in Northern California to pursue leads in the kidnapping of Brandi Jondell Summers and Tiffani Wise, who were 5 and 2 years old, respectively, when they were abducted March 30, 1977. Their mother, Beverly Wise, 26, was found stabbed to death that day at their home, 1505 E. Alto Drive, here.

The girls have never been found and detectives believe both Casners either had the children recently or know who did, and that they probably know where the sisters are now.

Witnesses in the rural Cedar Ridge area, about five miles from Grass Valley, told San Bernardino detectives they saw the missing girls with Lee Casner as recently as six weeks ago.

Vivian Casner, 33, has not been charged in the case, but she was still in custody Wednesday. Police

said they are "still looking at her" and evaluating what role she may have played in the crime.

Meanwhile, investigators said Wednesday that no new leads regarding the whereabouts of the children have developed in the case and that they have no plans to return north this week.

After seeing a news story in the Grass Valley Union on Monday, three persons in that area telephoned police here saying they had seen the children.

However, officers said that everyone who called had seen the children about six weeks ago.

Since the children were taken they have reportedly been seen with various people in Idaho, Nevada, northern California and Virginia. One man they were reportedly often seen with was Roy Summers, Brandi's father.

He has been charged in the kidnapping and the murder of Wise, his ex-wife.

Summers, 39, is in an Oregon jail on unrelated charges and has waived extradition to California.

Investigators say they don't know why so many people would be helping to hide the children. They learned about Lee Casner from Summers' address book they found in a search of his Oregon home last fall. Officers don't believe the girls are being used for any illegal purposes.

In a related matter Wednesday in the Wise case, a preliminary hearing for Juanita Iwakiri, of Garden City, Idaho, was continued until March 12. Iwakiri, 27, is Vivian Casner's sister and has been charged there with what would be the equivalent in California of accessory to kidnapping.

Detectives believe she babysat the girls at her home in the Boise suburb last summer.