

Kidnap hearing

Woman granted immunity

By TINA MAY

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SAN BERNARDINO — A woman has been granted immunity from prosecution when she testifies today at the preliminary hearing of her brother-in-law, charged in the murder of a San Bernardino woman and the kidnapping of her two daughters three years ago.

Vivian Casner, 33, of Cedar Ridge, Calif., was ordered by Superior Court Judge Charles Bierschbach on Wednesday to answer any questions and produce relevant evidence in the case when she takes the stand.

Casner was arrested in February near her home and brought here for questioning in the case, but was released a few days later.

Michael Iwakiri, 31, is charged with accessory to murder and kidnapping and perjury because investigators believe he lied last month when he testified before the San Bernardino County Grand Jury.

Casner had declined to testify Tuesday at Iwakiri's hearing but was ordered by Judge Bierschbach to do so today in response to a request made Wednesday by Chief Deputy District Attorney Joseph Canty.

She was granted immunity from prosecution or penalty because of the answers she gives to specific questions. However, the immunity doesn't cover perjurious statements that could be made under oath, Bierschbach told a reporter after he made the order.

Although the hearing is being held in Municipal Court, the immunity order had to come from Superior Court.

Canty wants to question Casner regarding her knowledge about the presence of the missing girls, Brandi Jondell Summers and Tiffani Wise, at Michael and Juanita Iwakiri's Boise, Idaho, home.

Neighbors of the Iwakiris have told police the girls were at the couple's home several times since they were abducted March 30, 1977 — the day their mother, Beverly Wise, was found stabbed to death.

The sisters were seen in Boise most recently in June, but haven't been found. Mrs. Iwakiri reportedly babysat them off and on over the last three years.

In addition, Canty will ask Casner about a telephone conversation she had in February with San Bernardino Police Detective John McDonald.

Police have said Casner told McDonald that Mrs. Iwakiri is her sister and that she saw the missing girls at her sister's home in Boise when she visited there.

Several persons in the case have testified before the grand jury, including at least three women this week, one of whom was Shirleen Beer, of Manteca, Calif.

Beer is a sister of Roy Summers, the man charged with the murder and kidnapping. Wise is his ex-wife and Brandi is his daughter.

Beer's daughter, Nikki Kouretas, also testified before the grand jury as did Mrs. Iwakiri's niece, Faye Downing. However, what they said was not revealed because the content of grand jury testimony is confidential.

Meanwhile, testimony was heard Wednesday for the third day in Mr. Iwakiri's preliminary hearing in Municipal Court.

A neighbor of the Iwakiris, Laura Lee, testified that she had seen a girl that Mrs. Iwakiri called "Tiffani" at the Iwakiri home, probably early last summer.

Lee told San Bernardino and