

SANTA BARBARA NEWS-PRESS



Judge declines to reduce or revoke woman's bail

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Heather Lea Hulsey, the 21-year-old facing charges of vehicular manslaughter, driving under the influence and hit-and-run in the July 2006 death of Dr. Ronald Shlensky, remains in jail despite her lawyer's attempts on Monday to get the judge to reconsider.

As Ms. Hulsey, wearing a floral dress and handcuffs, looked on, defense attorney Mindy Boulet made an unsuccessful attempt to get Ms. Hulsey's bail reduced or revoked. If Ms. Boulet had been able to make a motion, it could have allowed the accused to leave Santa Barbara County Jail, where she has been incarcerated for almost a month.

Ms. Hulsey was visibly upset after Superior Court Judge Frank Ochoa's decision Monday to dismiss talks regarding bail because he said Ms. Boulet had not yet filed the proper paperwork. Ms. Hulsey's bail was set at \$250,000 on June 4 when the judge granted a prosecution request to revoke Ms. Hulsey's previously posted bail based on "raised concern" that she posed a threat to society because of an alcohol-related arrest in May.

Judge Ochoa granted the prosecution request to set a date for the trial, which is scheduled to begin Sept. 24 and expected to last approximately three weeks. Ms. Boulet said her client was unprepared to enter a plea Monday but said she could begin paperwork on a pre-plea report.

Senior Deputy District Attorney Hilary Dozer, covering for Senior Deputy District Attorney Arnis Tolks, who is on vacation, accused Ms. Boulet of stalling the trial and called her request for a pre-plea report a "sham."

"I think it's completely inappropriate for Mr. Dozer to stand up and say that my request for a pre-plea report is a sham," Ms. Boulet told the judge.

Mr. Dozer said he and Mr. Tolks were withdrawing any offers previously made to Ms. Boulet involving issues of settlement outside of court.

Ms. Hulsey is scheduled to be back in court Aug. 20 for more pre-trial discussions, at which time Ms. Boulet may again ask to have a bail review hearing.

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