

304-6

A Closer Look: SCHOOL SHOOTINGS

California teen is charged with murder

Grief counselors greet students at Santana High

By BEN FOX
Associated Press

SANTEE, Calif. — The 15-year-old suspect in a high school shooting spree was charged with two counts of murder yesterday as hundreds of his fellow students returned to find that bullet holes had been patched and that grief counselors had been assigned to every classroom.

Charles Andrew "Andy" Williams, accused of killing two people and wounding 13 others at Santana High School in suburban San Diego, remained silent throughout the brief, nationally televised hearing.

The boy, who has been described by an investigator as "mad at the world," wore an orange jail jumpsuit that hung from his thin frame and sat with his head bowed, occasionally looking up at his attorney.

Williams didn't enter a plea, and his arraignment was postponed for two weeks at the request of his lawyer, Randy Mize. He will be tried as an adult.

RELATIVES OF the two dead students, senior Randy Gordon and freshman Bryan Zuckor, as well as the families of those injured in the shootings, packed the courtroom.

Some students from the high school, including three cheerleaders, attended.

"I don't hate him for what he did," said cheerleader Courtney Guthaus. "I just want to know why."

San Diego County Superior Court Judge Herbert Exarhos set arraignment for March 26 and denied bail because of special circumstances contained in the indictment. Special circumstances are attached to crimes committed with a gun.

Charges include two counts of murder, 13 counts of premeditated attempted murder and other counts of assault with a deadly weapon and firearms possession.

The boy cannot be given the death penalty because of his age, said prosecutor Kristin

Anton. If convicted on all charges he could be sentenced to 500 years in prison.

Just hours earlier students and teachers returned to 1,900-student Santana High.

"It looks the same," said Jake Clarke, a 14-year-old freshman, "but it doesn't feel the same."

THE DAY BEGAN bleakly for some students when they learned of a shooting in Williamsport, Pa., where an eighth-grade girl wounded a female classmate at a Roman Catholic school.

"We keep hearing about more things that are happening. It's crazy," said 15-year-old Cory Martinez. "It's scary to go to school, but I can't say I feel safe anywhere right now."

Santana students spent yesterday talking with teachers, administrators, counselors and each other. There were no immediate plans to resume regular classes. About 150 counselors — some of whom worked at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colo., after the shootings there in 1999, were assigned to the school.

"The first priority will be to begin the healing process," said Granger Ward, superintendent of the district. "There's a lot of anger. There's a lot of grief. There's a lot of sadness."

Bloodstains in the bathroom where the shooting began had been painted over, and bullet holes in the stucco had been patched.

ABOUT 85 percent of the students showed up for school, down from 95 percent on a normal day, Ward said. Four of the students who were shot were back in school. Three other victims remained hospitalized, all in good condition.

Morghon Liddell, 15, said he was not ready to return. "I think it's too soon. How are we supposed to walk by the bathroom or through the hallway and not think about it?" he said.

Ward said three students who may have known about the defendant's plans were not allowed to return to class because police and school district officials were still investigating the shooting.

Among them was Vanessa Willis, a 15-year-old neighbor



Charles Andrew "Andy" Williams, seated next to his attorney Randy Mize, did not enter a plea in yesterday's hearing before San Diego County Superior Court Judge Herbert Exarhos.

of Williams who said she had heard his threats but thought they were a joke.

When asked if she thought classmates would be mad at her, she said, "I don't really care. . . I feel bad for everyone that was hurt and everything, but they want to be mad at me. . . They don't know the whole story."

Bryan Zuckor's mother, Michelle Zuckor, told KFMB-TV in San Diego that she tried to call her son after hearing of the shooting.

"I was on my cell phone. I was trying to call him, but he wouldn't answer," she said. "He was such a loving person. He would always say, 'I love you, Mom'."

Investigators said Williams

was filled with anger when he was arrested and expressed no remorse. Friends have said he was constantly picked on.

The image of a rage-filled adolescent shooting classmates perplexed friends and acquaintances who knew Williams as a happy-go-lucky kid in Brunswick, Md., the town of 5,700 where he lived before moving to Southern California with his father last summer. His parents divorced 10 years ago.

Art Fairweather, principal of Brunswick Middle School, said Williams was on the honor roll.

"His grades were always good," Fairweather said. "He seemed to have a lot of friends, and he appeared to be well-adjusted."



Crystal Varela, left, hugged Christine DiMaggio outside Santana High School in Santee, Calif., yesterday.

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