

# **Hells Angels Chief Pleads Not Guilty to Slew of Charges**

## **Court: George Christie Jr. denies all counts in alleged drug-peddling scheme while continuing to try to raise \$100,000 bond for bail.**

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By Daryl Kelley

National Hells Angels leader George Christie Jr. pleaded not guilty Tuesday in Ventura County Superior Court to charges of running a criminal gang that stole drugs from an Air Force clinic and peddled them to high school students.

In a brief hearing, Christie, 54, maintained his innocence of 23 criminal counts in a broad drug and racketeering case filed in February against 28 motorcycle gang members and associates. He is also charged with tax evasion, grand theft, fraud and firearms possession.

"He firmly denies all charges," said Century City lawyer Anthony Brooklier, who represents Christie.

Christie, a co-founder of the Ventura chapter and a national club spokesman for two decades, remains in Ventura County Jail in lieu of \$1 million bail. Brooklier said Christie is still attempting to raise the \$100,000 bond fee that would set him free.

"It's a lot of money, and it's very difficult to put together," Brooklier said. "[Prosecutors] are scrutinizing everything."

Christie must submit documents showing that the source of the bond fee is legitimate--a common requirement in an organized crime case. Several weeks ago, Brooklier said Christie was prepared to offer the equity in three houses his family owns and perhaps make monthly payments to a bondsman.

The attorney would not comment further Tuesday about why that has not occurred.

Chief Deputy Dist. Atty. Jeff Bennett has said he is challenging the source of funds that paid for two of the houses.

"The bail issue is in the hands of the defense," Bennett said.

Opposing attorneys next meet at a June 28 pretrial conference, where they will discuss the logistics of making voluminous evidence available to the defense. About 120,000 pages of evidence and hundreds of audio and videotapes were presented to the Ventura County Grand Jury before its Feb. 23 indictments.

"It's just a lot of work to do," Brooklier said. "I'm plodding through the [11,000-page] grand jury transcript."

Christie waived his right to a speedy trial. No trial will take place before Aug. 28.

Prosecutors charge that Christie--operating out of his Ventura tattoo parlor on Main Street and the Angels' industrial-area clubhouse--sold drugs at or near schools in Ventura and Ojai through a group of youths called "The Outfit."

But Brooklier has argued that Christie never knew the young Los Angeles Air Force Base clerk charged with stealing more than 700,000 Vicodin and Valium pills and funneling them through a Hells Angels associate for sale to Ventura County adults and teenagers.

The four-year Hells Angels investigation is the longest and has the largest number of suspects in recent county history.