

## Bumper bender/No injuries



Traffic was blocked on Friday afternoon when a car pulling out of an alley was hit by a Jeep travelling south on Queensway. JOHN MCKENZIE/FREE PRESS

## Accused called dupe

By NEIL HORNER

*Cariboo News Service*

Paul Forknall was nothing more than an innocent dupe for Robert Copeland's manipulations.

This according to Forknall's defence lawyer Charles Lugosi as the first degree murder trial of 19-year-old Tiffany Meagan McKinney continues in B.C. Supreme Court taking place in Quesnel.

During cross-examination of undercover police operative Constable Jay Benthall this week, Mr. Lugosi repeatedly stressed that his client was young, had low self-esteem and limited intelligence, making him easy prey for manipulation by police and co-accused Robert Copeland.

Noting that suspects have been known to give false confessions for a num-

ber of reasons, Mr. Lugosi grilled Constable Benthall about his tactics with his client. He suggested that, even though Mr. Forknall may have led police to Tiffany McKinney's gravesite, this could have meant only that Mr. Forknall was aware of its location, but not necessarily that he'd killed her.

Under Mr. Lugosi's relentless cross-examination, Constable Benthall conceded that young people, such as then 18-year-old Paul Forknall, were easier to draw confessions from and that a suspect's emotional state could also be a factor.

Mr. Lugosi then proposed that his client was suggestible because he was a high school drop out with

a learning disability and a low I.Q. It was a premise that Constable Benthall shot down when he replied he was unable to answer the question.

The defence lawyer suggested his client could well have been impressed by Constable Benthall's display of "hot" cars, beautiful women and a bounty of cash. Mr. Forknall may have seen Constable Benthall (whose code-name in a dummy drug organization was "Beach") as a role model and attempted to mirror him, suggested Mr. Lugosi.

Throughout his cross examination on Wednesday, Mr. Lugosi attempted to paint Robert Copeland as a leader, while portraying Paul Forknall as a follower.



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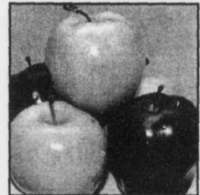
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