

Los Angeles Times

Ventura County

Lawyer for Hells Angels Leader Asks Judge to Reconsider Bail

Courts: Attorney cites the recent discovery that George Christie Jr.'s mother, 83, has terminal cancer.

May 23, 2001 - TRACY WILSON, TIMES STAFF WRITER

An attorney for national Hells Angels leader George Christie Jr. is asking a Ventura County judge to reconsider lowering bail for his client after learning that Christie's elderly mother is dying of cancer.

Last week, Christie pleaded not guilty to 23 criminal charges in a broad drug and racketeering case against members and associates of the motorcycle gang. Prosecutors say Christie, 54, ran a criminal organization that peddled drugs to high school students in Ojai and Ventura. So far, they have successfully argued to keep Christie jailed in lieu of \$1-million bail.

But Century City lawyer Anthony Brooklier filed a motion Tuesday asking Superior Court Judge Art Gutierrez to reconsider lowering Christie's bail to \$250,000.

The matter was set for a hearing Friday over the objection of Chief Deputy Dist. Atty. Jeff Bennett, who told the judge, "We've already been down this road. There is no change."

Brooklier contends that the situation has changed.

Speaking after the hearing, he said Christie has been unable to raise the \$100,000 bond fee that would set him free and now faces an urgent family situation that warrants reconsideration by the court.

Late last week, Christie's 83-year-old mother, Georgia, was diagnosed with terminal cancer and told she only had weeks to live, Brooklier said.

"He can't make the \$1-million bail," Brooklier said. "We've tried. It cannot be done at this point."

Brooklier said Christie's bail should be lowered to allow his client to see his mother.

Christie, a co-founder of the Ventura chapter of the Hells Angels and a national club spokesman for two decades, has been held in Ventura County Jail for nearly three months after being indicted by the Ventura County Grand Jury in February.

During Tuesday's hearing, Gutierrez agreed to make voluminous evidence, including transcripts

of the grand jury proceedings, available to the defense. Those materials remain sealed from the public.

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

Christie, his estranged wife and their two adult children are among 26 people arrested since the February indictment. Other suspects include nine members of the motorcycle group who were allegedly involved in drug sales.