



Randy Steven Kraft leaves Courthouse after his arraignment.

MARK BOSTER / Los Angeles Times

Could Face More Charges

Kraft Pleads Innocent to 6 Counts of Murder

By JERRY HICKS, Times Staff Writer

Dressed in street clothes in court for the first time since his arrest on suspicion of mass murder in May, Randy Steven Kraft pleaded innocent Friday to six Orange County murders dating back to 1976.

His attorneys said they are ready for the preliminary hearing, set for Sept. 12. And Deputy Dist. Atty. Bryan Brown said he has not excluded adding more murders that are under investigation to the Kraft case, but that right now the count would stay at six.

Brown added he still has reports to read from sheriff's investigators and the county crime laboratory before making a final decision on any new charges.

The case against Kraft includes five robbery charges, one charge of sodomy and two charges of sexual mutilation. All six victims in the case were young men between the ages of 18 and 25.

Kraft also is the key suspect in six murders in Oregon and two in Michigan. And Orange County police agencies are reopening investigations of unsolved murders back to the early 1970s to see if there is evidence to tie any of them to Kraft.

Kraft, 38, a Long Beach computer consultant whose family is from Orange County, had made all four previous court appearances in the

mustard-yellow jump suit uniform of the Orange County Jail.

His chief attorney, Doug Otto, said he wanted Kraft to begin wearing street clothes in court "to show that Randy is a human being, just like you and me." News coverage of Kraft has been so negative, Otto said, "it has dehumanized him. We're trying to combat that negative image."

Kraft, who was dressed in casual clothes and a brown jacket, said nothing in court besides pleading innocent. However, Central Municipal Judge John J. Ryan barred television and newspaper cameras at Friday's arraignment at Otto's request.

Ryan approved a request by the prosecution that Kraft give the court a handwriting sample. Brown would not comment on it, but Otto told reporters someone in the Orange County Jail had written a letter that might be used as evidence against Kraft, and that the prosecution is attempting to see if Kraft is the letter's author. Otto did not oppose the handwriting sample request. He said it would prove Kraft was not the author.

"People are always trying to get out of jail on someone else's back," Otto said. He said he expects Brown

Please see KRAFT, Page 9