

CHLOROFORM story

A 57-year-old accountant charged in the chloroform inhalation death of his 20-year-old girlfriend told police that the woman liked to engage in what he called "rough sex."

Melvin Robert Bowers of Ellicott City said in a taped interview played during a Howard Circuit Court hearing yesterday that he handcuffed and spanked the woman at her request on the night of her death.

"I never would do something she didn't want to do," the certified public accountant said. Bowers, a divorced father of four children, also told investigators that he considered burying the body of Geneva Marie Hodge of Baltimore in his back yard but instead decided to call 911.

Bowers is charged with manslaughter, reckless endangerment and inhaling harmful substances for the Sept. 6 death of Hodge. He could be sentenced to 15 years in prison if convicted. He told the officers that he gave Hodge the chloroform after she woke up in the middle of the night complaining of a toothache.

An autopsy revealed that Hodge died from inhaling chloroform, a toxic liquid used in small doses by dentists. The autopsy also showed that Hodge had been drinking the night she died.

Deputy Public Defender Louis Willemin is asking Judge James Dudley to prevent prosecutors from using statements Bowers gave to police after arrest at his trial, which is scheduled to begin March 9.