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## Laytonville murder suspect pleads not guilty in Mendocino County court



A Sept. 16 preliminary hearing for Laytonville murder suspect Talen Clark Barton was scheduled in Mendocino County Superior Court Tuesday afternoon. Chris Pugh-Ukiah Daily Journal

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Talen Clark Barton is not guilty, according to his public defender, Linda Thompson, who entered the plea on his behalf in Mendocino County Superior Court Tuesday afternoon.

Thompson also told Judge Ann Moorman the defense would be denying all special allegations in the case, where Barton is accused of having stabbed two people to death on Meadow Lane in Laytonville last month, as well as injuring two others.

Barton will return to the courtroom at 1:30 p.m. Sept. 16, with two hours being set aside for a preliminary hearing. There are also 30 CDs of the investigation Thompson would like to review before Barton's next hearing.

Mendocino County District Attorney David Eyster plans to prosecute Barton for two counts of premeditated murder in the deaths of Teo Palmieri, 17, and his father, Coleman Palmieri, 52, along with two counts of attempted murder of Dr. Cindy Norvell, 54, and her brother, Theodore Norvell, 52, and an additional two counts of false imprisonment of two teenage girls who were also staying at the home during the time of the incident.

Both Cindy and Theodore Norvell were hospitalized for their injuries and have since been released.

The DA's Office is also seeking eight special allegations of using a dangerous weapon in the commission of a crime.

Successful prosecution of first-degree murder charges in California can result in a sentence of 25 years to life in state prison, life imprisonment without parole or the death penalty.

"It's been a policy of this office and the district attorney to not even discuss the possibility of the death penalty until after the preliminary hearing when everything's been laid out on the table," said Mike Geniella, spokesman for the DA's Office.

Geniella previously said the age of the suspect sometimes factors in, meaning the younger the person is when a death penalty-eligible crime is committed, the less likely statistically that person is to actually receive a death sentence. Also, California isn't known for executing many Death Row criminals.

Barton, who grew up in the foster care system, was said to have been taken in by the Norvell-Palmieri family a year before the July 19 stabbings.

Some local residents have said they were shocked to learn of Barton's involvement in the incident, while others have described Barton as having a more problematic type of personality at times.

"(This) is the last thing I would have expected," Theodore Norvell, a Canadian citizen, told the CBC last month. "If you look at the facts, (Barton) had some criminal involvement in the past, but if you really knew the situation the way my sister did, this is the last thing you'd expect."

The MCSO said during its investigation that Barton may have told a friend two weeks before the homicides that he had thoughts of killing "someone."

Investigators have yet to formally establish what led Barton to allegedly grab a 12-inch kitchen knife in the Laytonville home just after midnight on July 19, and fatally stab Teo Palmieri in his bedroom, killing him after what the Sheriff's Office deemed to be a violent struggle.

Barton then allegedly moved through the home wounding Cindy and Theodore Norvell, before sparing the two teenage girls, each a daughter of Cindy Norvell and Coleman Palmieri, and Theodore Norvell.

After giving himself up to deputies, Barton admitted to being a heavy marijuana user, but denied using controlled substances, the MCSO stated. The Sheriff's Office reported no controlled substances were recovered from the scene.

Barton is being housed at the Mendocino County Jail on a no-bail status.

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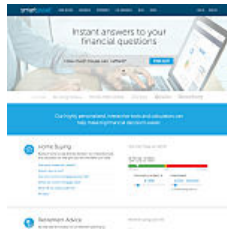
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