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## Laytonville murder suspect's psychological assessment reveals hatred for victims



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Mendocino County Jail booking photo of Talen Clark Barton Contributed

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1 COMMENT

Talen Clark Barton will make his last appearance Tuesday in Mendocino County Superior Court for the brutal murders of a Laytonville family.

Details into his state-of-mind before-and-after the killings have been released as part of the Probation Department's report and final sentencing recommendations that paints a picture of the hatred he had for two of the victims, and the troubled life Barton lived since childhood.

Prior to sentencing, the Probation Department is tasked with compiling a report of recommendations to the judge outlining the crime, providing interviews and investigation details.

Barton, 19, agreed to accept a plea deal last month in exchange for guilty pleas of two counts of murder, two counts of attempted murder and two counts of false imprisonment while using a knife in the commission of all the crimes.

He agreed to a minimum 71-year mandatory sentence that includes \$10,000 in restitution for the surviving victims. He will receive an "official" sentence Tuesday at 9 a.m. from Superior Court Judge Ann Moorman.

Following the murders on July 19, Barton was interviewed the next day by Dr. Donald Apostile of Santa Rosa at the Mendocino County Jail for a psychiatric evaluation that revealed he intended on only harming Teo and Coleman Palmieri as part of a planned murder-suicide.

Dr. Cindy Norvell, wife of Coleman Palmieri and mother to Teo Palmieri, was injured in the stabbings,

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but Barton said he didn't intend to kill her and described her as a "saint," saying she interrupted him during the crimes which derailed his planned suicide.

Cindy Norvell's brother visiting from Canada, Theodore Norvell, was also injured during the attacks. Two teenage girls of the family were uninjured as Barton said he "killed everyone he wanted to kill."

Barton was taken in by the Laytonville family at age 17 after he had been arrested for threatening his previous foster mother, Denise Shields.

According to the probation report, Barton was subsequently arrested for misdemeanor vandalism in the January 2013 incident with Shields, and served five months of formal probation. The incident was the only crime on record Barton had committed prior to the murders, according to reports.

Barton also described his anger for Shields to investigators in which he stated, "I would have killed her if she had been there (at the Palmieri house). If anyone deserved it she did. She also knew I had anger issues," Barton was quoted as saying in the report.

A juvenile probation officer at that time noted in a report the concerns of "Talen's emotional balance and his risk of becoming a danger to others."

The Norvell-Palmieri family was even informed by the same probation officer that it wasn't a good idea to take Barton in.

When interviewed by detectives, Cindy Norvell stated at the time that Barton said, "You guys are really gonna regret ever bringing me into your home."

Although that was the case, Barton told Apostile during his psychological assessment that he loved the Norvell-Palmieri family, and that it was the closest thing he ever had to a family. Barton said he couldn't feel the family's unconditional love, and that his life had been meaningless since the age of 8. He reported being suicidal since around the age of 14.

Barton relayed to the doctor he intended to kill Teo Palmieri, 17, because he was never happy and that both he and his father, Coleman Palmieri, would be better off with reincarnation, which Barton believed in despite being Agnostic, and that one would have a chance at reimproving themselves after death. He said Coleman Palmieri, 52, was just a "useless electrician."

Barton told investigators that he was angry with Teo Palmieri prior to killing him, characterizing the victim as someone who "had an uncontrollable temper, and wasn't going anywhere."

Teo Palmieri was murdered first, in his bedroom just after midnight on July 19, which law enforcement characterized as a violent struggle as Barton put his hand over the 17-year-old's mouth and attempted to slit his throat before he woke up.

The Probation Department's report stated the county's forensic pathologist determined Teo Palmieri died from having his throat slit along with five stab wounds to his neck and body. Coleman Palmieri was killed after being stabbed nine times by Barton with injuries to his neck and body that included being stabbed through the heart.

Apostile reaffirmed Barton as a heavy drug user, and at the time of his interview with Barton, said Barton was clinically depressed but that he believed him to not be psychotic at the time of the murders.

Apostile also reported that Barton was aware of the nature of the crimes and that he knew it was wrong to commit them. Barton denied taking any medication leading up to the crimes, and stated he had never been diagnosed with any mental illness.

Barton indicated he started smoking marijuana at age 13, at least once a week for recreational purposes. By age 15, he stated, he smoked 5 to 10 grams of marijuana every day, and by 18, estimated he was smoking one-quarter ounce per day.

Barton said he no longer had become high after smoking marijuana, but enjoyed the taste of it. Additionally, Barton relayed he liked to smoke hash, honey oil and "kief," or what he described as crystals from the leaf of a marijuana plant, or pure THC.

Barton said he didn't grow the marijuana himself, but got it from others. He also stated he had used LSD 10 times in the past, and psychedelic mushrooms approximately 15 times in the past.

Apostile's report stated Barton frequently burned himself on the forearm with the "marijuana cigarettes," and had been into fantasy card playing, including "Dungeons and Dragons," and identified with the character "Ger," who is an assassin who kills and rapes with a sword.

Apostile offered a diagnosis of posttraumatic stress disorder to investigators, saying Barton self-medicated with marijuana, despite never being able to solve his problems or longing.

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Barton had lived in Mendocino County for five years prior to the murders, and was a 2014 graduate of Laytonville High School. He apparently lived in Eureka briefly between 2014 and 2015 and worked at Ramone's Bakery and Cafe.

He stated he had lived in California for 10 years, and had also lived in Nevada, Alaska and Washington. He was born in Phoenix, to a woman who allegedly had a history of methamphetamine, cocaine and heroin abuse, even when pregnant.

Barton told investigators his parents were never married, and he was raised by his mother and stepfather until he was 8 years old, at which time he went into foster care as a result of his mother and stepfather's drug abuse.

He said he was beaten by his stepfather, who would threaten him and his older brother with weapons while under the influence of methamphetamine. Barton also stated he was sexually abused once by a friend of his stepfather.

Barton described his mother to investigators as someone who was chronically depressed, especially when on drugs. He said that he had been in contact with his birth mother on Facebook and said they were friends, despite not having seen her for six years. Barton said he hadn't talked to his father since he was 15, and had a younger stepbrother and older brother.

Mendocino County Sheriff's Office lead detective Clint Wyant stated in his report to the Probation Department that his investigation and interviews with Barton led him to believe the teen was "pure evil," and said it was the most brutal thing he had ever seen in his 17-year career in law enforcement.

"This murder was very calculated, and I hope to never see him out of prison," Wyant was quoted as saying in the probation report. "He is an absolute monster."

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