



BUTTE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY



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PRESS RELEASE

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Teichert Ponds Shooter to be Tried as Juvenile

A Butte County Juvenile Judge yesterday turned down the District Attorney's request that a 16-year-old juvenile accused of shooting and killing a homeless man and wounding another at Chico's Teichert Ponds be tried as an adult.

Butte County District Attorney Mike Ramsey said that after extensive examination and briefing of the issue, the judge ruled that the now 17-year-old Chico male would remain in juvenile court for trial and disposition, rather than be transferred to adult court to be tried for murder and attempted murder for the September 4, 2021 shooting.

Ramsey said the case started on September 4, 2021 at approximately 2:30 a.m. when Chico Police responded to a shooting at a homeless camp near Teichert Ponds. Officers arrived approximately three minutes after receiving emergency calls and discovered two victims had been shot. One of the victims, Guy Vanzant, 53, of Chico, was declared dead at the scene. The second victim, a 47-year-old Chico man, suffered several gunshot wounds and was taken to Enloe Medical Center.

Witnesses in the area said that just prior to the shooting, a group of four juvenile males, including the shooter, walked past the victims' encampment. After passing the encampment and exchanging words with homeless residents in the area, multiple shots were fired. The investigation revealed only one firearm, a semi-automatic pistol with a laser sight, was used in the shooting.

After a wide-ranging investigation by Chico Police, the shooter was identified and arrested 13 days later. The other juveniles are considered witnesses. The gun was never recovered.

Ramsey noted under new California juvenile law, it is difficult to transfer a juvenile to adult criminal court, even for the most heinous of crimes. The juvenile shooter will be tried in the juvenile court and should he be found guilty, he would be subject to the jurisdiction of the juvenile court only to the age of 25, when he would be released.

Ramsey additionally noted that the legislature did away with the California Division of Juvenile Justice (previously the California Youth Authority) last year and any imprisonment of the juvenile would occur at the local juvenile hall until age 25.

The juvenile's trial will be scheduled at his next hearing in juvenile court on September 14, 2022.