



# BUTTE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY



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## PRESS RELEASE

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### Three Chico Residents Head to Trial for Motel Parking Lot Murder

Two men and a woman from Chico held to answer today for the murder of 41-year-old John David Noonan that occurred in the parking lot of a Manzanita Court motel on the afternoon of January 23, 2020. Eric Allen, 37, Justin Cozakas, 34 and Monica Ruggiero, 35, will all be heading to trial for their role in the shooting death of Noonan.

Butte County District Attorney Mike Ramsey said testimony presented at the two-day preliminary hearing revealed that Noonan had stolen drugs and money from his then girlfriend, Ruggiero, in January 2020 ending their relationship. Ramsey said Ruggiero then enlisted Cozakas and Allen to find Noonan either to get the money and drugs back, or to wreak revenge upon him. Text messages from Ruggiero's phone confirmed she lured Noonan to the parking lot of the Motel 6 on Manzanita Court in Chico on January 23, 2020 at approximately 12:23 p.m. Noonan arrived alone in his vehicle and the others arrived in a separate vehicle driven by Cozakas with Ruggiero in the front passenger seat and Allen in the rear passenger seat. The cars parked next to each other in a rear lot.

Ramsey said further testimony at the hearing established Noonan got out of his vehicle and approached Cozakas as Cozakas remained in the driver's seat of his vehicle. A verbal argument ensued at Cozakas' open driver's window between the two men until Cozakas rolled up the window and at the same time put down his rear passenger drivers-side window. At that time, Allen produced a handgun and shot Noonan from the rear passenger seat. Noonan died in the parking lot as the others fled the scene in their car. They were later captured in February 2020 by Chico Police detectives after an intensive investigation.

At the time of Ruggiero's arrest in February, she was in possession of over \$10,000 cash and more than an ounce of heroin. Ruggiero was charged with possession of heroin for sales in addition to the murder charge, and was also held to answer for that offense. Cozakas and Allen were also charged and held to answer as felons in possession of firearms.

The three defendants will be arraigned on June 16, 2021 at 8:30 a.m., at which time a jury trial date will be set. They remain in custody in lieu of bail of \$1,000,000.



Eric Allen

Justin Cozakas

Monica Ruggiero