



# BUTTE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY



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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **THREE OROVILLE MEN HELD IN DOUBLE HOMICIDE Motive Alleged to be Marijuana Deal Gone Bad**

After a two-day preliminary hearing in the Butte County Superior Court, three men were held to answer yesterday for the shooting death of two Florida brothers in a remote area near Forbestown in October 2020.

Judge Jesus Rodriguez found sufficient evidence to allow the case against **Michael Griff, 22, Austin Hogan, 22, and Kyle Smith, 25**, to proceed to trial for two counts of murder and two counts of robbery. Evidence presented at the hearing showed the victims, Randy Bonds, 33, and Jerry Bonds, 39, were brothers who came from the state of Florida to buy marijuana from the defendants.

Butte County District Attorney Mike Ramsey said the investigation into the murder of the Bonds brothers began on October 21, 2020 when their family members in Florida called the Butte County Sheriff's Office to report them missing. The family reported the brothers had flown to Los Angeles two days before and rented a car. The family, using a GPS application on one of the brother's phone, saw the brothers went missing in the Forbestown area the next day. A multistate investigation began when the Bonds' rental vehicle with blood in it turned up abandoned at a casino in Boomtown, Nevada. A witness then came forward with information that Griff, Hogan, and Smith killed the brothers, which led to the arrest of all three defendants and the finding of brothers' bodies.

Ramsey said two civilian witnesses and five law enforcement officers testified at the preliminary hearing outlining the evidence linking the three defendants to a meeting with the Bonds at Ponderosa Way and Lower Forbestown Road in eastern Butte County. The evidence established that the purpose of the meeting was for the Bonds to purchase marijuana from the defendants.

Ramsey said the evidence showed that after being lured to the remote location by the defendants, the Bond brothers were fatally shot by Griff and Hogan using a handgun and a shotgun. All three defendants then concealed the brothers' bodies under vegetation in the area. Smith then drove the victim's rental vehicle away, followed in a separate vehicle by Griff and Hogan, to the Nevada casino. Local and Nevada surveillance linked the defendants to the involved vehicles and to the homicide scene.

During the preliminary hearing, officers testified they located several pieces of property belonging to Randy and Jerry Bonds at Griff's home, including Randy Bonds' wallet with his Florida ID card. Investigators also discovered firearms at the residence and evidence of marijuana sales. Evidence showed all three defendants had recently been staying together at the Oroville residence.

In addition to the holding order for two counts of murder and two counts of robbery, Judge Rodriguez also found sufficient evidence that the murders were carried out for financial gain; while lying in wait; in the commission of a robbery, and constituted multiple murder. These findings allow for a sentence of life without the possibility of parole. The court also found sufficient evidence that Griff and Hogan each personally discharged a firearm.

All three defendants remain in custody on no bail holds. They are scheduled to appear on November 3, 2021 for further arraignment and the setting of a jury trial on all counts.