



# BUTTE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY



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## PRESS RELEASE

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### PRELIMINARY HEARING CONCLUDES FOR DOUBLE MURDER SUSPECT

A Gridley man was held to answer today following a preliminary hearing for the murder of two Alabama men, whose bodies remain missing.

Butte County Superior Court Judge Kristen Lucena found there was sufficient evidence presented by the prosecution during the two-day hearing to order **Ricardo Banuelos, 30, of Gridley**, to stand trial for both counts of murder.

Butte County District Attorney Mike Ramsey said Banuelos is charged with two counts of murder. If convicted, Banuelos faces life without the possibility of parole.

Ramsey said the case began with an investigation launched in November of 2021 when family members of the two men from Alabama reported the men had come to Gridley, but failed to return. The investigation revealed Banuelos had previously been sending commercial amounts of marijuana to the men in Alabama. Evidence showed that the men flew out to California on November 4, 2021 and were met by Banuelos and his brother, Alfredo, at the Sacramento Airport. Cell phone photos and video sent by the Alabama men to family members showed them to be at Banuelos' residence on East Evans Reimer Road in Gridley on November 4, before they vanished.

Friends and family of both John Dubose Jr., 20 of Selma, Alabama, and Ladexter Pelt, 25 of Eutaw, Alabama, told investigators they had no contact with either man since November 4, 2021.

Physical evidence, including blood DNA matching back to one of the men, was found in a detached garage at Banuelos' residence.

Ramsey said the bodies of the two missing men have not been located.

After the preliminary hearing, the defense requested Banuelos be released on bail. Judge Lucena denied the request and ordered Banuelos to be held without bail.

Ramsey said investigators are actively searching for Ricardo Banuelos's brother, **Alfredo Banuelos, 36**, who is also wanted for murder in connection with this case.

Ricardo Banuelos is next due in court on Wednesday, May 11, 2022, at 8:30 at which time the court will select a date for the jury trial.

Ramsey encouraged anyone with information about this case, the location of the victims' bodies or the whereabouts of Alfredo Banuelos to contact Butte County Sheriff's detectives at (530) 538-7671.



