

Convicted murderer formally sentenced

September 19, 2023



Gabriel Joseph Hughes, Crescent City was formally sentenced to 21 years to life for the knife-wielding attack, second degree murder of Rick Nations, 69 and the Assault with a Deadly Weapon on Nations' daughter Lindsey, 23.

Superior Court Judge, the Honorable Darren McElfresh sentenced Hughes to 15 years to life for the murder of Nations (PC 187(a), three years for the knife attack (PC 245(a) and an additional three years enhancement for great bodily injury (PC 1202.7, on Lindsey Nations.

The state requested the sentences run consecutively. Judge McElfresh concurred with the DA after listening to defense counsel and Probation, pronounced sentences for Hughes, 43. The convicted Hughes was also assessed a \$300 court fine, stayed pending completion of parole / probation.

The state was represented by Del Norte County assistant district attorney Todd Zocchi. District Attorney Katy Micks oversaw and approved the plea agreements with the Superior Court. Hughes was represented by defense attorney Karen Olson.

Hughes originally entered not guilty pleas in the December, 2022 unprovoked attack on Rick Nations and the attempted murder charge on Lindsey but changed his pleas to guilty to 2nd degree murder and assault with a deadly weapon, respectively, in July. The attacks took place in front of the Nations' home on West Keller Ave.

During an emotional victim impact statement, family member Tera Nations read a moving letter from her younger sister Lindsey, who was unable to attend today's sentencing. Lindsey continues to recuperate from serious hand and neck wounds inflicted by Hughes. Lindsey's words spoke lovingly of her father always being there for her. " He'll never be able to walk me down the aisle or experience the children I plan to have one day." Sister Tera shared Lindsey's words, " I love you, Dad."

In pronouncing the sentences, Judge McElfresh called Rick Nations a hero for expending his last moments of life, saving his daughter's life. The Nations family called Lindsey a hero and her recovery a miracle.

Hughes was credited with 287days in Sheriff's custody which will apply to the consecutive sentences he was given. The Sheriff will transfer Hughes over to the Dept. of Corrections and Rehabilitation at San Quentin within the next ten business days.