

Matthew Rickner murder trial begins

May 20, 2024



A trial is indeed a rare event...a murder trial occurs about as often as a solar eclipse. In 2023, from some 2000 Del Norte cases about a quarter of those cases were felonies. There were just seven cases that went to trial. Mostly for cost expediency, plea deals are almost the rule, again with rare exceptions.

The Second Degree Murder and Drug Trial of Matthew Earl Rickner, 30, is one of those rare solar eclipse cases.

Rickner entered a Not Guilty plea to several felony counts associated with the shooting death of his mother, last December. He entered his plea during his arraignment in January. Jury selection began Monday, May 20 in Division 2, Superior Court Judge Darren McElfresh presiding.

Rickner is represented by Public Defender Karen Olson. Del Norte Assistant District Attorney Todd Zocchi is the prosecutor for the state.

Rickner is charged with killing his mother, Phyllis, 68 in the home the family was residing in the 500 block of Humboldt Avenue. The incident took place, December 29, last year. Suspect Rickner reportedly fled the scene and was arrested by CHP officers about a quarter mile from the scene of the crime.

The Jury selection process was tedious but very efficient allowing for a fair unbiased jury to listen to and process all evidence. The 12 jurors from the community were screened and selected for this assignment.

The trial is expected to run about one week.

