



Murder defendants request side-by-side seating during trial

By *The Record*

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STOCKTON – Two men who are married to each other and charged with a Tracy woman's murder asked a judge today if they can sit side-by-side in court to coordinate their defense.

Robert and Jorge Morgan entered pleas of not guilty. But the brief hearing was dominated by their seating arrangements rather than their alleged crime. Bailiffs seated Robert Morgan, 39, and Jorge Morgan, 24, in the jury box separated by two empty seats between them.

"We're not getting a fair defense," Robert Morgan told the judge. San Joaquin County Superior Court Judge Bernard Garber set a full hearing for next week when he will take up the issue. Garber said inmates are typically allowed to talk in court.

The couple is charged with stabbing 58-year-old Cynthia Ramos to death Aug. 6 in her own home in Tracy where she lived. Tracy Police arrested the Morgans within hours of the reported killing.

Read Tuesday's Record for more on this story by staff writer Scott Smith.