

Tracy Press

Letter urges probe of violations of court order

by Eric Firpo

Jan 25, 2010 | 1794 views



The family of Tracy homicide victim Cynthia Ramos fired off e-mails Friday to state and federal elected officials and to the governor, demanding an investigation into why the two married defendants in the case were housed for a time in the same cell at Deuel Vocational Institution.

Family members are upset by what they describe as breakdowns in the criminal justice system that have forced them to endure courthouse hallway taunts from one defendant and let a court order be ignored.

Robert Morgan, 39, and Jorge Morgan, 24, could face the death penalty if found guilty of homicide, with special-circumstances allegations that they killed Ramos during a robbery and burglary and that they lay in wait for her.

Ramos, 58, was killed Aug. 6 in her home on MacArthur Drive in Tracy, where she was stabbed 55 times, bludgeoned 13 times and strangled.

The Morgans, who are registered domestic partners in San Joaquin County, have told the court they are married. Their attorneys fought against an order that keeps them apart at the jail, in the courthouse holding cells, and on the bus on the way to and from court appearances.

Judge Bernard Garber ruled in favor of keeping the Morgans apart, yet the two were housed for a day or two in the same cell after they were moved from San Joaquin County Jail in French Camp to Deuel Vocational Institution east of Tracy.

Christina Barnes, Ramos' daughter, said she was told by someone from the state Office of the Inspector General that the prison was unaware of the court order keeping the Morgans apart.

But that assertion was contradicted in an e-mail to Barnes and her relatives from Undersheriff John Picone of the San Joaquin County Sheriff's Office, who said employees at the prison were told verbally and in writing that the men should remain separated. A spokesperson from the Inspector General's Office could not be reached for comment Friday.

Ramos' relatives said the two men could have "exercised their marital rights" in the prison cell and "had every opportunity to conjure up their next scheme," be it plotting their defense or planning to attack a judge, a prosecutor or someone from the victim's family.

Last year, a judge in the Stockton courthouse was stabbed by a defendant, who a Lodi police detective then shot and killed in court.

Defendants walk briefly through the same hallways as the public, which led to one encounter Ramos' relatives found especially disturbing.

Barnes said in e-mails this week that as Jorge Morgan was led through the hallway for a November court appearance, he

held his shackled hands in the air and told her brother, Daniel, and his wife, Rebecca Martinez, "This don't mean s----. ... I'll do life. ... I did it ... and I'd do it again."

Later, Jorge Morgan appeared in court wearing a mask.

"We were told that he was spitting, kicking, yelling obscenities," Barnes said.

In January, the Morgans were allowed to talk and joke with each other at the same table within feet of a bailiff while attorneys met in the judge's chambers to hash out an issue.

"It shouldn't have happened," Barnes said. "Why put orders in place, if they're not going to do anything?"

She said the family sent letters to state Sen. Lois Wolk, Rep. Jerry McNerney, Assemblywoman Cathleen Galgiani, and Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, hoping to "find out what the problem is and fix it so it doesn't happen to another family."

The Morgans will be in court this afternoon, where prosecutors expect to announce whether it will seek the death penalty.

Contact Tracy Press City Editor Eric Firpo at 830-4223 or efirpo@tracypress.com

Comments

ConcernedNeighbor

January 26, 2010

Electric chair is too kind for both of them, they should receive the punishment they dished out on the poor woman! I am sure she didn't die right away!

The justice system is surreal!

Dark side of Amy speaking,.... again!

CN

ConcernedParents

January 25, 2010

How about an electric chair for two?

PantsOnDaGround

January 25, 2010

Oh how cute. Isn't it wonderful that our tax dollars are being spent on these two playing housey-wifey. And to think it's all because some congressman or politician is afraid to put a stop to what he thinks is 'discrimination'.

How nice it must be for them to be afforded such luxuries because our lawmakers haven't the backbone to speak on this issue?

ConcernedParents

January 25, 2010

The death penalty would be useful here especially with the current overcrowding situation and the punk already promised to do it again.

How about we have no murders in Tracy this year? Keep a good eye on the scum TPD, don't let up.

discjockey

January 25, 2010

Scumbags, and they got away with a technical system error housing them in the same cell, well I hope they recommend the death penalty just for the smart remarks this fool had to say to the family, let's go back to the old ways an eye for an eye, don't waste tax payer's money on these low life dirt bags, forgive me Lord 4 saying this, but so true! overkill yes get rid of them both peace!