



Oct. 25, 2024 Media Release

Eric Craig Hodges Held to Answer on One Count of Murder During Pretrial for Alleged Homicide of Delbert Wilder

Nevada City, CA – Forty-eight-year-old Eric Craig Hodges, who is accused of murdering local resident Delbert Wilder, was held to answer at his preliminary hearing on Oct. 24 on one count of murder with a gun enhancement. This means the judge deemed there was enough evidence presented by the Nevada County District Attorney's Office (DA) and Nevada County Sheriff's Office (NCSO) to justify prosecution and proceed with a criminal case against Hodges.

This 12-year-old cold case was brought to life with great effort from NCSO Deputy Rory Sonnier, who testified at the preliminary hearing and spearheaded the case while he worked as a detective in NCSO's Major Crimes Unit (MCU), determined to bring the family justice.

Delbert Wilder, 63, of Grass Valley, was found deceased at his property on Nov. 15, 2011, following a request for a welfare check. He died of a fatal gunshot wound. After 12 years and no arrests made, Deputy Sonnier and NCSO staff turned to the community for help in bringing justice to Wilder and his surviving family by releasing a cold case documentary. The video, called *Murderer Among Us*, was released Nov. 15, 2023, which marked the 12th anniversary of when Wilder was discovered murdered. The video shared insights into Wilder's life and his murder and encouraged community members to come forward with information, and that's exactly what the community did.

With the help of a variety of media outlets who shared the video, coupled with the power of social media shares, tips and phone calls began coming in.

"Twelve years is a long time to wait for an arrest, but when we bring a homicide case to our DA, it's imperative that we have sufficient evidence and proof of the crime committed and who committed it," said Sheriff Shannan Moon at the time of Hodges' arrest. "This case has been on the cusp of being solved for some time now, thanks to our MCU detectives who have been relentless and determined to bring closure for the Wilder family. Along with recent advances in DNA technology, new witness statements as a direct result of our video, and the DA reviewing our new evidence and filing this case, we hope justice will finally be served."

After the conclusion of his pretrial on Oct. 24, in which Hodges will be held to answer, NCSO and the DA are elated that steps for justice continue in the right direction. Hodges was formally arrested back on Jan. 3, 2024, by NCSO's MCU and charged with the murder of Wilder. He remains behind bars at Wayne Brown Correctional Facility without bail. The date of the trial has not been set yet.

The documentary on Wilder, *Murderer Among Us*, remains available to watch and share online:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nShGC6_AFYg

<https://www.facebook.com/nevadacountysheriffsoffice/videos/873347171029881>

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For media inquiries and interviews, please contact the Nevada County District Attorney's Office at (530) 265-1301.