



BUTTE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY



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PRESS RELEASE

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Hurleton Man Charged with Domestic Violence Murder

A Hurleton man was arraigned today in Butte County Superior Court for the shotgun death of an ex-girlfriend this past weekend.

Curtis Ector Morales, 43, of Hurleton, was charged with felony counts of murder with the use of a firearm and possession of a short-barreled shotgun for the shooting of Dakota Morningstar, 32, at Morales' property in the 600 block of Black Bart Road in the rural Hurleton area east of Oroville.

According to Butte County District Attorney Mike Ramsey, at approximately 11:55 p.m. on April 13, 2025, the Butte County Sheriff's dispatch center received a call reporting a woman with a gunshot wound on Black Bart Road. Upon arrival, deputies located the female victim with an apparent shotgun wound to her lower left side. She was pronounced dead at the scene.

Sheriff's detectives determined Morningstar was the ex-girlfriend of Morales and had lived on the Black Bart Road property until recently. Shortly before being shot, Morningstar had arrived on the property to pick up her dog and personal possessions she had left behind when she vacated the property.

After arriving at the property, witnesses in the area described that Morningstar and Morales engaged in a verbal argument that ended with Morningstar being shot. During a subsequent search of the property, sheriff's detectives located a short-barreled shotgun hidden in a manzanita bush on the property.

Morales was arrested and booked into the Butte County Jail on suspicion of murder on Sunday morning.

Morales was arraigned in court today with his private attorney in attendance. He will next appear in Butte County Superior Court on April 24, 2025, for entry of plea and setting of a preliminary hearing. He is being held in custody in lieu of \$2,015,000 bail.

