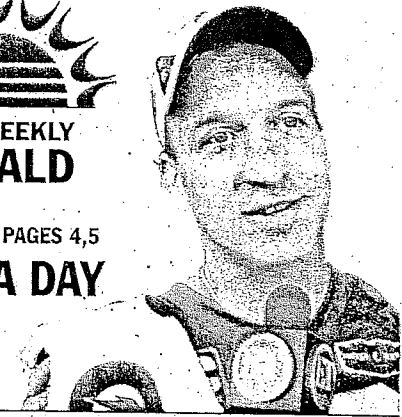


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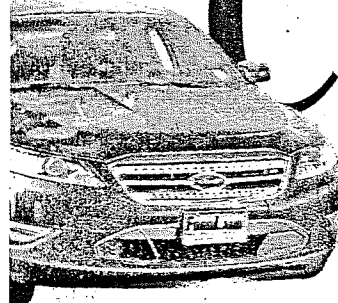
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NFL MANNING SWAYS MEDIA DAY

Peyton Manning the biggest star by far on Media Day in Miami.

FORD SALES UP 25 PERCENT

Ford reported a 25 percent jump Tuesday, while Toyota suffered an expected blow after the recall. **FRONT PAGE 10**



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Trial starts for man accused of killing stepfather

By **KATE BAXTER**
STAFF WRITER

PUNTA GORDA — A conflicted, disabled veteran who loved to stay in contact with friends on CB radio.

A volatile man who often lost his temper and had a lot of enemies.

Two strikingly different pictures of a Deep Creek man bludgeoned to death seven years ago were painted Tuesday by prosecutors and the defense during opening statements in the trial of James P. Mace.

Mace, 38, is charged with second-degree murder in the death of his stepfather, Joseph "Sonny" Dostie, in May 2003. If convicted of the crime, Mace faces up to life in prison.

Dostie's body was found in the garage of his Deep Creek home on May 19, 2003. Officials said the Deep Creek man died sometime between

May 9-19.

In the first day of the anticipated four-day trial, prosecutors called four witnesses — three of whom recalled Dostie's fondness for CB radio and their involvement, if any, in contacting law enforcement after not hearing from the communications devotee in May 2003.

Assistant State Attorney Donald Mason and defense attorney Russell Kirshy first hinted at their likely strategies for trial during opening statements.

While touching briefly on the victim's life, Mason concentrated mainly on the timeline of Dostie's final days during his opening statements to the jury.

For 10 days — March 9-18, 2003 — Dostie was not heard from nor seen by his friends, Mason said. "That is very strange," he said in court. "He



PHOTO PROVIDED BY WINK NEWS

Defendant James P. Mace, 38, is pictured in court during the first day of his second-degree murder trial. He is accused of bludgeoning his stepfather to death seven years ago.

always was in contact either by house phone, CB radio or his cell phone."

Keep these dates in mind, Mason told jurors, as he pointed to a large calendar for

the month of May 2003.

Witnesses' statements during the course of this trial will place Mace inside Dostie's

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home just five days before the Deep Creek man's body was found, Mason said in court.

There also will be testimony of how Mace was stopped by police in Dostie's van — on the day his body was found, the prosecutor said. Mace had in his pocket two "cash cards" belonging to the victim, Mason added.

During his opening statements, Kirshy hinted at the likelihood

that the defense would present testimony Dostie was fatally bludgeoned by someone else.

"Sonny Dostie is dead, and that is a tragedy," he told jurors. "But what would also be a tragedy is if the wrong person was accused of his death."

Listen carefully during the trial to the testimony of people who interacted with Dostie, Kirshy told jurors.

The victim was an extremely volatile person, Kirshy claimed.

The jury will hear from witnesses who claim Dostie was a drug smuggler, an undertaking that undoubtedly creates a lot of enemies, Kirshy added.

"Sonny was not a fine, upstanding citizen," he told jurors. "He had a lot of baggage. He had a lot of people who hated him."

The trial resumes today at the Charlotte County Justice Center.

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