

Daily Pilot

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Trial begins in freeway shooting that killed boy

Marcus Anthony Eriz, 26, is accused of second-degree murder in the road-rage shooting on the 55 that killed 6-year-old Aiden Leos as his mother was driving.

BY ANDREW TURNER

The criminal trial for Marcus Anthony Eriz, accused in the 2021 death of a Costa Mesa kindergartner, began with opening statements on Thursday in Orange County Superior Court in Santa Ana.

Eriz, 26, faces felony charges for second-degree murder and for discharging a firearm at an inhabited motor vehicle, as well as a sentencing enhancement for causing death through the use of a firearm.

Authorities arrested Eriz and his girlfriend, Wynne Lee, a Costa Mesa couple, on June 6, 2021, more than two weeks into an investigation of the fatal shooting of 6-year-old Aiden Leos. Aiden

had been riding in the back of a vehicle driven by his mother, Joanna Cloonan, on his way to school.

The incident happened in the northbound lanes of the 55 Freeway at about 8 o'clock on the morning of May 21, 2021. A traffic altercation led to Cloonan displaying an offensive hand gesture toward the couple after being cut off, prosecutors said.

Eriz then reached for his weapon, pointing it at Cloonan's vehicle and fatally struck Aiden, piercing his liver, lungs and heart before exiting via his abdomen, the prosecution said.

Senior Deputy Dist. Atty. Dan-

iel Feldman presented the 9-millimeter gun used in the incident to the jury. He argued that Eriz acted with "callous and cold disregard for human life" when he decided to pull the trigger.

Questioned by investigators as to why he fired the weapon, prosecutors said Eriz replied, "I just grabbed my gun for some reason."

The prosecution also played a 9-1-1 call placed at the scene, on which a frantic Cloonan could be heard pleading for help while telling the dispatcher, "My son is bleeding to death."

Among the witnesses presented on Thursday morning, testimony was heard from Sgt.

See **Trial**, page A3



Irfan Khan | Los Angeles Times

SENIOR DEPUTY public defender Randall Bethune, right, and Marcus Anthony Eriz, a Costa Mesa man accused of killing a 6-year-old Aiden Leos in a 2021 road-rage incident, at the start of the trial in Santa Ana.

8-year-old skates her way to win national championship

BY MATT SZABO

Brooke Benton has come a long way since first picking up a skateboard less than three years ago.

A national championship certainly signifies that for the Huntington Beach shredder, who is still just 8 years old.

Brooke won the girls' street skateboarding national championship for all ages at the Amateur League Skateboarding Nationals, held at the California Training Facility in Vista last weekend.

"I was pretty happy with what I did in my run," she said in her typical low-key way. "It felt great to win."

"Seeing skaters cheer each other on, compliment each other and genuinely support each other throughout competitions has been a really positive experience."

— Ruth Benton
Brooke's mom

Brooke, a second-grader at a local public elementary school, said a special celebration was held for her at school on Tuesday.

At nationals, her score of 78.33 was based on the best of her two runs.

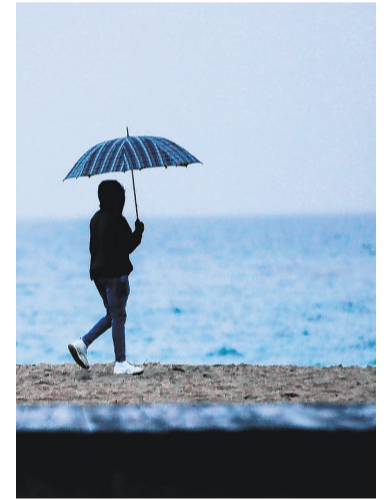
Brooke placed fifth at last year's Amateur League Skateboarding Nationals, held in Lakeland, Fla. To ensure she didn't experience any burnout, her parents entered her in four local California Amateur Skateboarding League competitions last year to see if she could qualify again.

She did so easily, taking first



Courtesy of Ruth Benton

See **Skates**, page A3 **BROOKE BENTON**, 8, poses with her girls' street skateboarding national championship trophy.



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

A BEACHGOER WALKS in the sand at Main Beach Park as rain begins to fall in Laguna Beach in January last year.

Rain showers expected to arrive Saturday

National Weather Service estimates precipitation totals will reach 1 to 2 inches, with most of it falling early next week.

BY LILLY NGUYEN

Orange County residents may want to stay indoors this weekend as scattered rain showers are projected to begin Saturday, according to the National Weather Service.

As of Thursday afternoon, forecasts indicate that rain is expected to roll in in waves, said Brian Adams, a meteorologist with the San Diego station. The first wave will sweep through Southern California early Saturday morning, bringing with it scattered showers all the way through evening that same day.

Adams said there may be a chance for thunderstorms

See **Showers**, page A2

Newport Beach police find no crime in allegations related to NBA player

BY CITY NEWS SERVICE

Newport Beach police Wednesday they completed their investigation of Oklahoma City Thunder guard Josh Giddey in allegations he had an inappropriate relationship with an underage girl but were unable to "corroborate any criminal activity."

The police department said it had conducted a "thorough and exhaustive examination" of accusations that were "circulating on social media involving Josh Giddey."

Police said the detectives inves-

tigating Giddey "have reviewed all of the available information and were unable to corroborate any criminal activity related to Mr. Giddey. The Newport Beach Police Department is committed to ensuring that accurate information is disseminated to the public, while also ensuring the rights of all those involved."

Giddey, 21, declined to comment when questioned about the situation during a practice at the end of November.

"Yeah, I mean, I understand the question, obviously, but there's no further comment right now," he

told reporters.

Details about the allegations were slim, but questions began arising over the Thanksgiving weekend when photos circulated online of Giddey with a female. In a since-deleted social media post, an anonymous user alleged that the girl in the photos was a junior in high school.

TMZ reported that the female seen with Giddey in the photos was refusing to cooperate with police, as was her family.

dailypilot@latimes.com
Twitter: @TheDailyPilot



Kyle Phillips | Associated Press

POLICE INVESTIGATED Oklahoma City Thunder guard Josh Giddey after allegations he had an inappropriate relationship with an underage girl. Police said they could not "corroborate any criminal activity."

BOYS' BASKETBALL

Costa Mesa beats rival Estancia, stays in first place

BY MATT SZABO

Marlee Slone had blood on his jersey in the fourth quarter, after he said he was bit on his hand when he went to steal the ball.

The Costa Mesa High sophomore guard ran to the locker room for a quick jersey change. No. 3 became No. 21.

As for the Mustangs, they smelled blood in the water late in Wednesday's Orange

Coast League game against visiting rival Estancia.

Costa Mesa rallied for a 66-60 win, keeping the Mustangs in first place in league with four games remaining.

Estancia won the Battle for the Bell series, as the teams split the two league meetings and the Eagles held the point differential tiebreaker. But the win Wednesday meant more to Costa Mesa (13-11, 7-1 in

league), which has won seven straight league games since losing that opener at Estancia.

The Mustangs are now a game ahead of Calvary Chapel (6-2 in league). Estancia, which is now 17-7 overall, fell to 5-3 in league.

"We've definitely been maturing," Marlee Slone said. "We've been together more every game. We just

See First, page A3



COSTA MESA'S Marlee Slone (3), shown in action last December, helped the Mustangs earn a big victory on Wednesday night.

File Photo

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The sale will be made in an "as is" condition, but without covenant or warranty, expressed or implied, regarding title, possession, or encumbrances, to pay the remaining principal sum of the note(s) secured by the Deed of Trust, with interest and late charges thereon, as provided in the note(s), advances, under the terms of the Deed of Trust, interest thereon, fees, charges and expenses of the Trustee for the total amount (at the time of the initial publication of the Notice of Sale) reasonably estimated to be set forth below. The amount may be greater on the day of sale. Trustor: Samuel Sardon, a single man Duly Appointed Trustee: National Default Servicing Corporation Recorded 01/10/2005 as Instrument No. 200500018326 (or Book, Page) of the Official Records of Orange County, California. Date of Sale: 02/06/2024 at 12:00 PM Place of Sale: At the North front entrance to the County Courthouse, 700 Civic Center Drive West, Santa Ana, CA 92701 Estimated amount of unpaid balance and other charges: \$683,790.87 Street Address or other common designation of real property: 925 Azalea Drive, Costa Mesa, CA 92626 A.P.N.: 412-213-09 The undersigned Trustee disclaims any liability for any incorrectness of the street address or other common designation, if any, shown above. If no street address or other common designation is shown, directions to the location of the property may be obtained by sending a written request to the beneficiary within 10 days of the date of first publication of this Notice of Sale. If the Trustee is unable to convey title for any reason, the successful bidder's sole and exclusive remedy shall be the return of monies paid to the Trustee, and the successful bidder shall have no further recourse. The requirements of California Civil Code Section 2923.5(b)/2923.55(c) were fulfilled when the Notice of Default was recorded. NOTICE TO POTENTIAL BIDDERS: If you are considering bidding on this property lien, you should understand that there are risks involved in bidding at a trustee auction. You will be bidding on a lien, not on the property itself. Placing the highest bid at a trustee auction does not automatically entitle you to free and clear ownership of the property. You should also be aware that the lien being auctioned off may be a junior lien. If you are the highest bidder at the auction, you are or may be responsible for paying off all liens senior to the lien being auctioned off, before you can receive clear title to the property. You are encouraged to investigate the existence, priority, and size of outstanding liens that may exist on this property by contacting the county recorder's office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge you a fee for this information. If you consult either of these resources, you should be aware that the same lender may hold more than one mortgage or deed of trust on the property. NOTICE TO PROPERTY OWNER: The sale date shown on this notice of sale may be postponed one or more times by the mortgagee, beneficiary, trustee, or a court, pursuant to Section 2924g of the California Civil Code. The law requires that information about trustee sale postponements be made available to you and to the public, as a courtesy to those not present at the sale. If you wish to learn whether your sale date has been postponed, and, if applicable, the rescheduled time and date for the sale of this property, you may call or visit this internet website www.ndscorp.com/sales, using the file number assigned to this case 20-20265-SP-CA. Information about postponements that are very short in duration or that occur close in time to the scheduled sale may not immediately be reflected in the telephone information or on the internet website. The best way to verify postponement information is to attend the scheduled sale. NOTICE TO TENANT: You may have a right to purchase this property after the trustee auction pursuant to Section 2924m of the California Civil Code. If you are a "representative of all eligible tenant buyers" you may be able to purchase the property if you match the last and highest bid placed at the trustee auction. If you are an "eligible bidder," you may be able to purchase the property if you exceed the last and highest bid placed at the trustee auction. There are three steps to exercising this right of purchase. First, 48 hours after the date of the trustee sale, you can call 888-264-4010, or visit this internet website www.ndscorp.com, using the file number assigned to this case 20-20265-SP-CA to find the date on which the trustee's sale was held, the amount of the last and highest bid, and the address of the trustee. Second, you must send a written notice of intent to place a bid so that the trustee receives it no more than 15 days after the trustee's sale. Third, you must submit a bid so that the trustee receives it no more than 45 days after the trustee's sale. If you think you may qualify as a "representative of all eligible tenant buyers" or "eligible bidder," you should consider contacting an attorney or appropriate real estate professional immediately for advice regarding this potential right to purchase. *Pursuant to Section 2924m of the California Civil Code, the potential rights described herein shall apply only to public auctions taking place on or after January 1, 2021, through December 31, 2025, unless later extended. Date: 12/27/2023 National Default Servicing Corporation c/o Tiffany and Bosco, P.A., its agent, 1455 Frazee Road, Suite 820 San Diego, CA 92108 Toll Free Phone: 888-264-4010 Sales Line : Sales Website: www.ndscorp.com Connie Hernandez, Trustee Sales Representative A-4805540 01/05/2024, 01/12/2024, 01/19/2024

APN: 419-083-05 TS No.: 23-06225CA TSG Order No.: 230326676 NOTICE OF TRUSTEE SALE UNDER DEED OF TRUST YOU ARE IN DEFAULT UNDER A DEED OF TRUST DATED JULY 20, 2011. UNLESS YOU TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY, IT MAY BE SOLD AT A PUBLIC SALE. IF YOU NEED AN EXPLANATION OF THE NATURE OF THE PROCEEDING AGAINST YOU, YOU SHOULD CONTACT A LAWYER. Affinia Default Services, LLC, as the duly appointed Trustee, under and pursuant to the power of sale contained in that certain Deed of Trust Recorded July 25, 2011 as Document No.: 2011000360154 of Official Records in the office of the Recorder of Orange County, California, executed by: Seth R. Harmon, a single man, as Trustor, will be sold AT PUBLIC AUCTION TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER for cash (payable in full at time of sale by cash, a cashier's check drawn by a state or national bank, a check drawn by a state or federal credit union, or a check drawn by a state or federal savings and loan association, savings association, or savings bank specified in section 5102 of the Financial Code and authorized to do business in this state). All right, title and interest conveyed to and now held by it under said deed of trust in the property situated in said county and state, and as more fully described in the above referenced deed of trust. Sale Date: February 23, 2024 Sale Time: 9:00 AM Sale Location: Auction.com Room, Doubletree by Hilton Hotel Anaheim - Orange County, 100 The City Drive, Orange, CA 92868 File No.:23-06225CA The street address and other common designation, if any, of the real property described above is purported to be: 2262 Colgate Drive, Costa Mesa, CA 92626. The undersigned Trustee disclaims any liability for any incorrectness of the street address and other common designation, if any, shown herein. Said sale will be made in an "AS IS" condition, but without covenant or warranty, expressed or implied, regarding title, possession, or encumbrances, to pay the remaining principal sum of the note(s) secured by said Deed of Trust, with interest thereon, as provided in said note(s), advances, if any, under the terms of the Deed of Trust, estimated fees, charges and expenses of the Trustee and of the trusts created by said Deed of Trust, to-wit: \$386,033.55 (Estimated) as of . Accrued interest and additional advances, if any, will increase this figure prior to sale. It is possible that at the time of sale the opening bid may be less than the total indebtedness due. NOTICE TO POTENTIAL BIDDERS: If you are considering bidding on this property lien, you should understand that there are risks involved in bidding at a trustee auction. 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NOTICE TO PROPERTY OWNER: The sale date shown on this notice of sale may be postponed one or more times by the mortgagee, beneficiary, trustee, or a court, pursuant to Section 2924g of the California Civil Code. The law requires that information about trustee sale postponements be made available to you and to the public, as a courtesy to those not present at the sale. If you wish to learn whether your sale date has been postponed, and, if applicable, the rescheduled time and date for the sale of this property, you may call, (800) 280-2832 for information regarding the trustee's sale or visit this internet website, www.auction.com, for information regarding the sale of this property, using the file number assigned to this case, T.S.# 23-06225CA. Information about postponements that are very short in duration or that occur close in time to the scheduled sale may not immediately be reflected in the telephone information or on the internet website. The best way to verify postponement information is to attend the scheduled sale. NOTICE TO TENANT: You may have a right to purchase this property after the trustee auction pursuant to Section 2924m of the California Civil Code. If you are an "eligible tenant buyer," you can purchase the property if you match the last and highest bid placed at the trustee auction. If you are an "eligible bidder," you may be able to purchase the property if you exceed the last and highest bid placed at the trustee auction. There are three steps to exercising this right of purchase. First, 48 hours after the date of the trustee sale, you can call (800) 280-2832, or visit this internet website www.auction.com, using the file number assigned to this case 23-06225CA to find the date on which the trustee's sale was held, the amount of the last and highest bid, and the address of the trustee. Second, you must send a written notice of intent to place a bid so that the trustee receives it no more than 15 days after the trustee's sale. Third, you must submit a bid so that the trustee receives it no more than 45 days after the trustee's sale. If you think you may qualify as an "eligible tenant buyer" or "eligible bidder," you should consider contacting an attorney or appropriate real estate professional immediately for advice regarding this potential right to purchase. File No.:23-06225CA If the Trustee is unable to convey title for any reason, the successful bidder's sole and exclusive remedy shall be the return of monies paid to the Trustee and the successful bidder shall have no further recourse. For Trustee Sale Information Log On To: www.auction.com or Call: (800) 280-2832. Dated: January 4, 2024 By: Omar Solorzano Foreclosure Associate Affinia Default Services, LLC 301 E. Ocean Blvd., Suite 1720 Long Beach, CA 90802 (833) 290-7452 NPP0445037 To: ORANGE COAST DAILY PILOT 01/19/2024, 01/26/2024, 02/02/2024

SHOWERS

Continued from page A1

throughout the night into early Sunday morning, but that Sunday by and large would stay dry. Monday is predicted to see the heaviest downpour, with rain projected to last most of the day.

Rainfall is expected to be around 1 to 2 inches with the heaviest precipitation in the foothills of the Santa Ana Mountains and in the southernmost part of the county. Wind gusts should remain relatively low at around 15 to 20 mph in coastal Orange County, making for a breezy weekend though not much more than average.

"We have a large area of low pressure over the eastern Pacific Ocean and the core of it will be lifting towards Northern California and the Pacific Northwest; but because it's so strong, it will be generating waves [of rain] down to Southern California," Adams said. "There will be a little bit of moisture

from that, and the real axis is split between the Northwest, Southern California and parts of Baja California."

Adams said no two storms are alike this time of the year, but this January is drier than last year, where rain fell anywhere from 150% to 230% higher than average at sites throughout the county. Comparatively, this January has been dry, with National Weather Service sites reporting in at half of what is typically expected at this point in the "wet year," a complete inverse of what meteorologists expected based on the La Niña-El Niño cycles.

"Last year, we were in the La Niña phase, where it's expected to favor typically drier weather. This year, we're in the El Niño phase, where it's supposed to be wetter, but that hasn't been the case so far," Adams said.

The weather is expected to be dry in the two weeks following Monday's rain.

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Send Letters to the Editor to erik.haugli@latimes.com. See Mailbag for guidelines. The Daily Pilot, established in 1907, is published Wednesday through Sunday by Times Community News, a division of the Los Angeles Times. Subscriptions are available only by subscribing to The Times, Orange County.

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CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS

Grid of crossword puzzle answers: SCAM TIVO SANTA WIRE ONEL CLEAR IDEA INGAL ALARM PENNY LOAFER TOY ERA EEC XES MADEMOISELLE ALTAR NAIL VEIL LAID STILE EINS EVER TLDRO ORATE CARAWAYS SEEDS SAG FAD EAT CAW RENAISSANCE ACHES ACNE STUN SEEYA PEEL SETS KSTEW ERRS TREE

Grid of Sudoku puzzle answers: 8 6 7 5 2 4 1 9 3 4 2 1 8 3 9 6 7 5 5 3 9 7 6 1 8 4 2 9 5 8 4 1 2 7 3 6 7 1 3 6 9 5 2 8 4 6 4 2 3 7 8 5 1 9 1 9 4 2 5 7 3 6 8 2 8 6 1 4 3 9 5 7 3 7 5 9 8 6 4 2 1

NOTICE TO CREDITORS OF BULK SALE (Division 6 of the Commercial Code) Escrow No. NB-L-11219-23

- (1) Notice is hereby given to creditors of the within named Seller(s) that a bulk sale is about to be made on personal property hereinafter described (2) The name and business addresses of the seller are: PRO FORM WINDOW CLEANING, INC., P.O. BOX 10142, COSTA MESA, CA 92627 (3) The location in California of the chief executive office of the Seller is: SAME AS ABOVE (4) The names and business address of the Buyer(s) are: DREAM CLEAN, 5502 WEST 141ST STREET, HAWTHORNE, CA 90250 (5) The location and general description of the assets to be sold are: FURNITURE, FIXTURES AND EQUIPMENT, LEASEHOLD INTEREST, LEASEHOLD IMPROVEMENTS, GOODWILL, TRADE NAME of that certain business located at 2424 SOUTHEAST BRISTOL STREET, 300, NEWPORT BEACH, CA 92660 (6) The business name used by the seller(s) at said location is: PRO FORM WINDOW CLEANING, 2424 SE BRISTOL ST, #300, NEWPORT BEACH, CA 92660 (7) The anticipated date of the bulk sale is FEBRUARY 7, 2024 at the office of: PORTFOLIO ESCROW, 12 CORPORATE PLAZA DR., #120 NEWPORT BEACH, CA 92660, Escrow No. NB-L-11219-23, Escrow Officer: LISA EVANS (8) Claims may be filed with Same as "7" above (9) The last date for filing claims is: FEBRUARY 6, 2024. (10) This Bulk Sale is subject to California Uniform Commercial Code Section 6106.2. (11) As listed by the Seller, all other business names and addresses used by the Seller within three years before the date such list was sent or delivered to the Buyer are: NONE.

Dated: JANUARY 12, 2024 TRANSFERREES: DREAM CLEAN INC., A CALIFORNIA CORPORATION ORD-2087610 DAILY PILOT 1/19/24

CITY OF COSTA MESA PUBLICATION

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Costa Mesa Zoning Administrator will render a decision on February 8, 2024 or as soon as possible thereafter, on the following item:

Application No.: ZA-23-16 and DR-23-04 Applicant/Agent: Hamilton Street Partners, LLC/Stephen Wan Site Address: 374-376 Hamilton Street Zone: Multi-Family Residential District, Medium Density (R2-MD)

Description: Zoning Application 23-16 and Development Review 23-04 is a request for a Minor Conditional Use Permit and Development Review to construct a new two-story duplex on each property at 374 and 376 Hamilton Street (total of four units proposed) with shared driveway access. The project would include demolition and grading of the existing development to accommodate the proposed duplexes that would feature units with two bedrooms, 1,356 square feet of habitable space, and attached two-car garages. New landscaping, site improvements, and hardscape are also proposed throughout the project site. (The project also proposes new accessory dwelling units (ADUs) which are reviewed under a separate permit from this planning application.)

Environmental Determination: The project is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.3 (Class 3), New Construction and Conversion of Small Structures.

Additional Information: For more information, call (714) 754-5245, or email planninginfo@costamesa.gov Planning Division staff are available from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM Monday through Thursday and alternating Fridays, except specified holidays. There will be no public hearing on this request. Any written correspondence must be emailed to ZAPublicComments@costamesa.gov prior to 12:00 PM on the day of the decision date (see above). The decision letter can be downloaded from the City's website indicating the decision date at: http://www.costamesa.gov/index.aspx?page=940 If you challenge this action in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you, or someone else raised, prior to the decision date.

THE ESTANCIA HIGH boys' basketball team earned the Battle for the Bell series win on Wednesday night.



Matt Szabo

FIRST

Continued from page A2

want to keep on going, no matter what ... [Estancia] can have the Bell. We want the league title."

Garry Slone netted a team-high 18 points for Costa Mesa, while Dylan Dunbar scored 11. Marco Rosas also provided a boost off the bench, scoring eight of his 10 points in the final frame.

The Mustangs overcame standout Kembe Hower-ton fouling out early in the fourth quarter.

Estancia took a 50-30 lead on a three-point play by Chris Garibay with 2:53 remaining in the third quarter. But Costa Mesa

went on a 28-3 run, capped by a three-pointer by Garry Slone with 1:55 left in the game.

"We stepped up in the second half and really got in tune with our defense," Costa Mesa coach Jesse Mercado said. "We did a better job of rotating and helping, and we did a better job of not giving up second opportunities. I think that's really what got us back in the game."

Senior point guard Jaedon Hose-Shea led Estancia with 21 points. Senior forward Peter Sanchez scored all 15 of his points in the first half for the Eagles, playing at less than full strength while making his return from a three-week absence due to a

shoulder injury.

"We went cold and couldn't hit a shot," Estancia coach Xavier Castellano said. "We rushed a couple. Give them credit, man ... They're a real good team."

"[Winning the Bell] is great for the community, but our goal is to be the best that we can be and to beat Mesa twice. The Bell is just the cherry on top. Today, we lost, man. We win the Bell, but it's not fun. [The Mustangs] stay in first place, and we've got to hope some things go our way, some teams can help us out [for us to win league]."

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TRIAL

Continued from page A1

Joe Garcia, an off-duty Seal Beach police officer who attempted to render aid to Aiden for several minutes before emergency personnel arrived.

A construction worker who was trailing the traffic altercation was also brought in as a witness.

Eriz, wearing glasses and a brown jacket with his hair tied back, sat next to his defense attorney, Randall Bethune of the Orange County Public Defender's Office, facing straight ahead toward Judge Richard King.

Bethune told the jury Eriz did not act with "malice," nor with "intent" in

firing his weapon at Cloonan's vehicle, referring to the incident as a "rash decision by a young man" that did not consider the consequences or the results.

Media coverage of the investigation and a substantial reward for information leading to an arrest related to Aiden's death increased pressure on authorities to get answers, said Bethune. He added the public had picked a side, that "the government owns the emotions" in the case.

Bethune said Eriz continued to go to work in the days after the incident, and when a co-worker brought it to his attention that the couple's car looked like the one au-

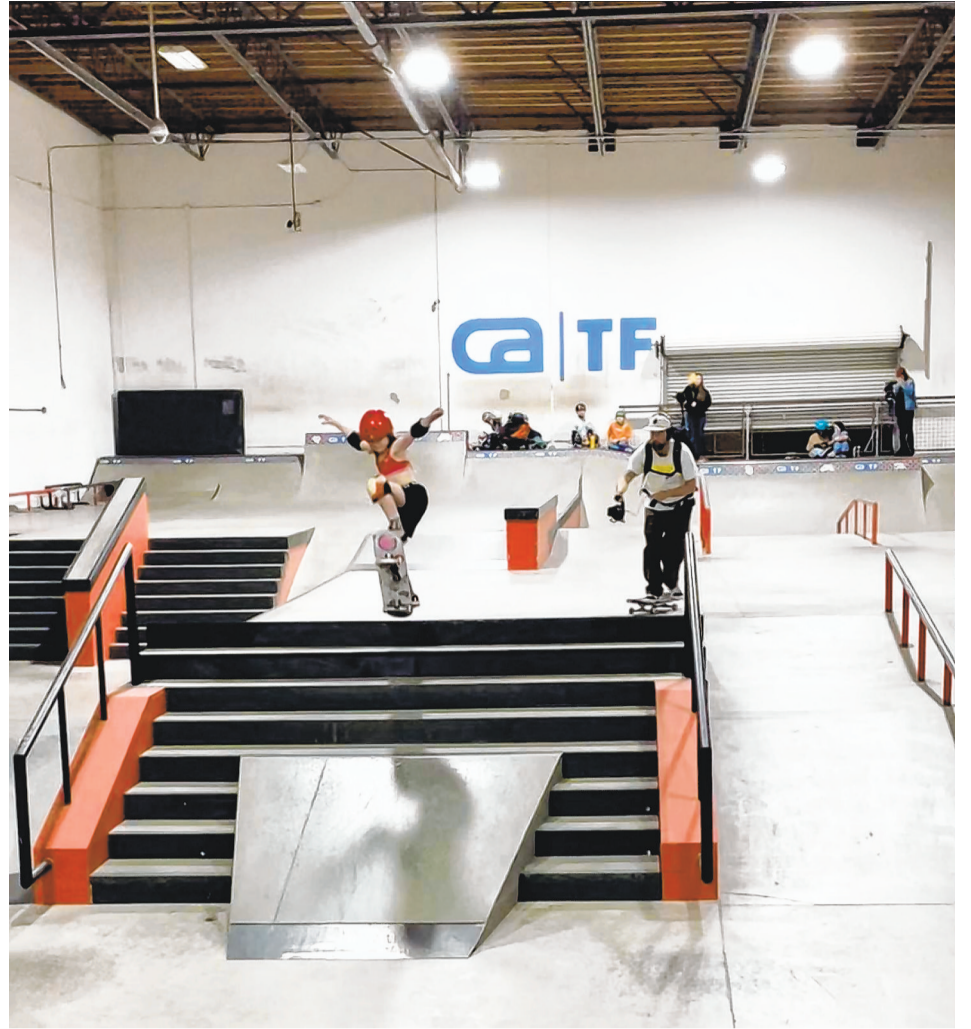
thorities were looking for, he had a panic attack.

"When you kill somebody, it doesn't come with a manual," Bethune reasoned as to why Eriz did not turn himself in then, contending that Eriz froze after realizing what had happened.

"He's not a monster," Bethune added. "... He didn't mean to kill anybody."

Lee is scheduled to appear in court for a pretrial hearing on Feb. 9. She is charged with one felony count of being an accessory after the fact. She also faces a misdemeanor charge for carrying a concealed firearm in a vehicle.

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Courtesy of Ruth Benton

HUNTINGTON BEACH'S Brooke Benton competes on her run at the California Amateur Skateboarding League national championships in Vista.

SKATES

Continued from page A1

place in three of the four competitions: Vans Huntington Beach, Volcom Costa Mesa and Fontana Skatepark-South. Still, she had to come back from a hairline fracture of her ankle in October.

"Competing in nationals the last two years has been an incredible experience for Brooke and us as a family," said Brooke's mom, Ruth Benton. "The skateboard culture is incredibly supportive and inclusive, and it has been really fun to meet skaters and families from all over the world. Seeing skaters cheer each other on, compliment each other and genuinely support each other throughout competitions has been a really pos-

itive experience."

In November 2022, Brooke was selected to join the Girl Is Not A Four Letter Word (GN4IW) team run by skateboard legend and hall-of-famer Cindy Whitehead. Her Instagram page @skatebrookie, started so family and friends could simply keep tabs on her, now has more than 8,000 followers.

Still, she stays grounded. She only skateboards two to five hours a week, taking lessons at Fountain Valley-based Intro 2 Skateboarding with her coach, Jon Deipoian.

Brooke also dances competitively. Her mom said she loves to stay busy, and the sports support each other and balance Brooke, so they haven't reached a crossroads yet in deciding a sport to pick.

"I usually skate two times a week and dance four times a week," Brooke said. "I don't know [which one I like more]. That's tough."

She said her next goal on her skateboard is a kick flip, and she wants to move to the new advanced girls' category in the California Amateur Skateboarding League.

"I'd say the average age is like 14," Ruth Benton said with a laugh. "It'll be a big jump for her, but it will be exciting."

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THE DAILY COMMUTER PUZZLE

By Jacqueline E. Mathews

ACROSS

- 1 Fraudulent scheme
- 5 Roku alternative
- 9 Christmas sleigh driver
- 14 Metal thread
- 15 First-year law student
- 16 Easy to understand
- 17 Notion
- 18 Actress Swenson
- 19 Morning waker-upper
- 20 Shoe with a coin in it
- 23 Plaything
- 24 Notable time
- 25 Overseas trade org.
- 26 _ out
- 28 French lady's title
- 34 Church table
- 37 Hammer's target
- 38 Hijab, e.g.
- 39 _back
- 40 Stairs over a fence
- 41 German "one"
- 42 At any time
- 43 Abbr. before a short version
- 44 Speak in public
- 45 Savory bits on rye bread
- 48 Droop
- 49 Short-lived craze
- 50 Ingest
- 53 Crow's noise
- 56 Era of Donatello and Raphael
- 60 Dull pains
- 62 Skin woe
- 63 Amaze
- 64 "Bye!"
- 65 Fruit rind
- 66 Hardens
- 67 "Spencer" actress's

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	13	
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53	54	55					56						57	58	
60							61								63
64															66
67															69

SUDOKU

By the Mephram Group

Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 box (in bold borders) contains every digit, 1 to 9. For strategies on how to solve Sudoku, visit sudoku.org.uk.

			5	4			3	
	2						7	
5		9						
	5		4	2				6
		3				2		
6			3				1	
1						3		8
	8						5	7
			9	6				

For answers to the crossword and Sudoku puzzles, see page A2.

- nickname
- 6 Without ill intent
- 68 Screws up
- 7 Star in Lyra
- 69 Sequoia, for one
- 8 "Frozen" snowman
- 9 Frightens
- 10 _ or nothing
- DOWN**
- 1 Tinder gesture
- 11 All tidied up
- 2 Apple beverage
- 12 Poi root
- 3 Combat venue
- 13 Fighting force
- 4 Not nice
- 21 2024, for one
- 5 Worked hard
- 22 Napoleon's fate

- 27 Cuts off
- 28 Fabric named for an Indian city
- 29 Hotel cleaners
- 30 Crude processor
- 31 "Star Wars" general
- 32 Dryer trap stuff
- 33 If not
- 34 Phillies infielder Bohm
- 35 Volcano output
- 36 Level
- 40 Performance platform
- 44 Likelihood
- 46 Poland's capital
- 47 Artist's stands
- 50 Go in
- 51 Less than 90 degrees
- 52 On edge
- 53 Whiskey-aging vessel
- 54 Pitching stars
- 55 _ one's appetite
- 57 Back of the neck
- 58 Big laptop brand
- 59 Helper: Abbr.
- 61 Look at
- Tribune Media Services

60 SEASONS South Coast Repertory

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