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(S.D.)-Tornquist Trial Began Tuesday



By: Kevin Larsen Posted at: 07/09/2014 10:49 AM

(Rapid City)- KOTA Territory News is reporting that prosecutors say there is clear evidence Matthew Tornquist shot his mother, Catherine, multiple times and disposed of her body. In opening statement, the defense says there are holes in the state's case.

The state has 55 witnesses who will testify during the Tornquist trial. Tuesday, the first set of witnesses testified. Many of them are from the Hot Springs community and they include ranchers, Catherine Tornquist's friends and law enforcement.

During his opening statement, South Dakota Attorney General Marty Jackley told jurors on the evening of Oct. 4, 2011, Tornquist shot his mother, dragged her body through the house, loaded her body in a Buick and ultimately got rid of it. The defense says the state's investigation is deeply flawed, particularly the search of Catherine's home.

A rancher testified that Matthew Tornquist knew his kids and had hung out at his ranch. He then says he had several guns that were stolen in August of 2011.

A friend of Catherine's, who reported her missing, also testified. And jurors got to hear the 911 call. A Fall River County Sheriff's deputy says after the call they treated it as a missing person case, but later that afternoon it became apparent it was more than that. He says when he spoke to Matthew Tornquist there were discrepancies in his story and he did not appear to be very worried about his mother.

The prosecution continues its case on Wednesday. With the lengthy witness list, this trial is expected last at least eight days. Tornquist faces a mandatory life sentence with no possibility of parole if convicted.

(Story Courtesy of KOTATerritory News)