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PRESS RELEASE

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DA formally accuses Bassler of two Mendocino murders

Mendocino County District Attorney David Eyster filed a complaint Friday accusing suspect Aaron Bassler with the murders of two Mendocino Coast men, and the attempted killing of a third man.

A formal complaint was filed in the Ten Mile Division of Mendocino County Superior Court in Fort Bragg. A declaration in support of an arrest warrant was also submitted to the court. Bassler is believed to be still hiding in rugged forestland between Willits and Fort Bragg.

District Attorney Eyster in his court filing alleged that the two murders of coast civic leader Jere Melo and Mendocino Land Trust employee Matthew Coleman are linked to the same shooter based on evidence gathered at the two scenes. Melo was killed last Saturday (Aug. 27) on timberland he helped managed east of Fort Bragg. On Aug. 11, Coleman was found shot dead in a remote area near Westport on the Mendocino Coast.

“I believe there is sufficient evidence to accuse the suspect of both slayings,” said Eyster. In addition, Eyster formally accused Bassler of attempting to kill a witness to the Melo shooting.

Eyster declined Friday to comment on specific evidence that investigators believe link the Melo and Coleman killings.

“This is not the time,” said Eyster.

Sheriff investigators have been consulting regularly with the District Attorney’s Office, the California Department of Justice and other allied law enforcement agencies.