

Emotions run high during Moquist trial

Emily Clingman, Editor | Posted: Thursday, February 4, 2016 12:20 pm

The trial of Jarrod Moquist, continued through Friday last week. 14 jurors, comprised of eight males and six females are seated. Moquist has been charged with the murder of Evan Graham in the first degree, assault in the first degree, two counts of crime of violence, and tampering with physical evidence. (See The Flume Jan. 29 and Oct. 23, 2015 for more on the story.)

Witnesses including forensic scientists and Even Graham's grandfather took the stand Thursday and Friday.

Thursday, witness Sharon Kniseley, a resident near the Redhill Forest subdivision, told the court she reported Graham's vehicle abandoned on County Road 7 for "quite some time."

"It just seemed like a long time," Kniseley said. "Maybe two weeks, I don't remember."

Kniseley was excused. Officer Jacob Lizakowski, a police officer with the city of Golden, Colo., was working for the Park County Sheriff's Office at the time of Kniseley's report and was dispatched to the abandoned vehicle. Called in as a witness, Lizakowski pointed to a map displayed in the courtroom and described the area where Graham's car was found – about a mile and a half from U.S. Highway 285 on County Road 7, near Safari Ranch.

"It's an area not traveled a lot," Lizakowski said.

The prosecution then called Park County Sheriff's Office Detective DJ Hannigan to the witness stand to continue his testimony, which began a few days earlier. At this point, the jury had heard several hours of recordings of the detective interviewing Moquist in September 2013, after Graham was reported missing, and from August 2015, when Moquist confesses to the murder and burial of Graham.

"Jarrod, you did the right thing," Hannigan can be heard saying to Moquist on the recording from last August. "The weight is off your shoulders."

"I'm done," Moquist said at one point, his voice trailing off as he said something about prison "and



A cover up in the open

After the murder of Evan Graham, Jarrod and Audra Moquist relocated his vehicle to County Road 7 near U.S. Highway 285 in Fairplay. The trio lived in a Winnebago-brand RV in Redhill Forest Estates as see in this photo, right side, background. They left the vehicle there with a slashed, flat tire so it appeared to be abandoned by Graham. (Photo by Emily Clingman/The Flume)

stuff.”

Hannigan later said to Moquist, “You’re not done. I wasn’t BS-ing you. You can rebound from this. I’ve seen it before.”

Hannigan was also heard telling Moquist that he would be willing to report that they got off on the wrong foot, but, “You were eventually willing to cooperate and tell us the truth.”

While the recording is playing in the courtroom, Moquist sat still and expressionless.

The recording continues and Hannigan is heard asking Moquist if he saw Graham hit the ground.

“Yeah, I did,” Moquist said.

“Who’s idea was it to bury Evan,” Hannigan said.

“Mine,” Moquist said.

Hannigan asked who chose the location.

“I did,” Moquist said.

Hannigan asked Moquist what he was thinking about. Moquist said he was worried about Graham’s family retaliating in some way.

“Could you really envision yourself like this (keeping the murder a secret) your whole life,” Hannigan said to Moquist during the interview.

“Yeah,” Moquist said.

“Really,” Hannigan said. “Wow.”

In earlier testimony, it was learned that Jarrod and his sister Audra Moquist relocated Graham’s vehicle from the Redhill Forest lot #504 to a remote location on County Road 7. Moquist admitted to stabbing a hole in the rear driver’s side tire. Hannigan asked Moquist why he moved Graham’s car.

To make it appear abandoned, Moquist told Hannigan.

Hannigan redirected the interview to discuss the day Graham showed up to the property extremely agitated – the morning Moquist shot him. Hannigan asked Moquist why Graham was so angry.

“Not sure,” Moquist said. “I think he was on something when he showed up.”

“Do you have any relief now that the story is out,” Hannigan asked Moquist that day.

“No,” Moquist said.

Through a series of additional questions during the interview with Moquist last year, Moquist reveals that he and his sister Audra remained on the property after the murder, and that he “just ignored it all” mentally and emotionally. Hannigan asked if he shot Graham to defend himself.

