

# BARDSLEY & CARLOS LLP

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## News and Media

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### **Trial opens for man in strangling case**

#### **Grant Macklem faces murder count**

Grant Macklem was an 18-year-old special education student who lived at home with his parents in Sunset Cliffs when he strangled a 17-year-old girl last year inside his bedroom.

To that, the prosecutor and defense lawyer agreed yesterday.

But was it murder or something else?

"This is the man that killed Sarah Beagles," attorney Marc Carlos told a jury, placing his hand upon the shoulder of his client during opening statements of Macklem's murder trial in San Diego Superior Court. "But it's not necessarily the mind that killed Sarah Beagles. That's why we're here."

Macklem is charged with murdering, raping and sodomizing Beagles on Sept. 19, 2003. If convicted, he will face a mandatory sentence of life in prison without the possibility of parole.

Deputy District Attorney Nicole Cooper told jurors the evidence will show that Macklem raped and killed Beagles over a 30-minute period. When he was done, she said, he covered her body with a blanket and called his mother, who was out of town.

Carlos told the jury Macklem has had mental problems virtually all of his life.

"You'll hear about voices inside his head," he said.

The victim, Carlos added, was a disturbed teenager who often had asked Macklem to kill her and was fixated on asphyxiation. She was Macklem's only friend, he said. The two had been romantically involved but she had moved on to other boyfriends, the lawyer said.

"What you have is a combination of two very disturbed people that ended disastrously," Carlos said.

He told the jury he hopes it will decide Macklem never intended to kill.

The jury will hear a taped confession by Macklem recorded by police shortly after the slaying. The tape was played at an earlier court hearing.

"Today, I just snapped," Macklem told investigators. "Something in my mind set off something and then Bam! That was it. Game over."

Macklem told police he asked Beagles to go into his room to show her something and as they walked down a dark hallway, his "body took over" and he put her in a choke hold he learned from watching kung fu movies.

Macklem told police he dragged her to his room, sat on her back and choked her until he felt her heart stop beating. He said the rage he was feeling was 5 percent of the rage he had stored up over her seeing other boys.

"If I had decided to go all out I probably would have torn her head off her shoulders," he said.

