



# Office of the District Attorney Stanislaus County

**Birgit Fladager**  
District Attorney

**Assistant District Attorney**  
David P. Harris

**Chief Deputies**  
Marlisa Ferreira  
Jeffrey M. Laugero  
Wendell Emerson  
Michael D. Houston  
Mark Zahner

**Bureau of Investigation**  
Chief Terry L. Seese

---

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **For Immediate Release**

Date: June 4, 2021  
Re: Matthew Douglas Nicholson  
Murder conviction and prison sentence

### **For More Information Contact:**

John Goold, Public Information Liaison  
Phone: (209) 525-6909

Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Matthew Douglas Nicholson, age 32, of Ceres, has been convicted of murder and assault with a firearm along with an enhancement for using a firearm in each crime and sentenced to state prison. Deputy District Attorney Erin Schwartz prosecuted the case for the People.

On January 11, 2018, Ceres Police responded to a report that a woman had been shot by her son. Upon arrival, officers located Lydia Nicholson with a gunshot wound to her head. Her husband told them that their son, Matthew Nicholson, had become enraged and was threatening to kill him and his wife. Nicholson grabbed a revolver and fired one shot into the wall and another into the ceiling before aiming the gun at his mother and shooting her once in the head. He then turned the gun towards his father's chest, but didn't fire. Nicholson eventually handed the gun to his father and left the house, fleeing to Riverbank where he was arrested shortly thereafter. Lydia Nicholson died after arriving at the hospital.

Nicholson entered a guilty plea to second degree murder and assault with a firearm and admitted the enhancement for using a firearm in each crime on April 23, 2021.

On May 28, 2021 at a sentencing hearing before Judge Shawn Bessey, multiple family members and friends of Lydia Nicholson gave victim impact statements to the court. Her daughter told the court how her "world absolutely shattered" that night and that each day since then has been an "absolute nightmare." Others spoke about Lydia as being like a second mother to them or mentioned how she always made them feel welcome in her home as if they were part of the family.

At the conclusion of the hearing, Judge Bessey noted the senselessness of the crime and sentenced Nicholson to serve 27 years-to-life in state prison.

###

Office: 832 12th Street, Suite 300 Modesto, CA 95354 Mailing: PO BOX 442 Modesto, CA 95353  
Telephone: (209) 525-5550 Fax: (209) 558-4027 www.stanislaus-da.org



<https://www.facebook.com/StanislausDistrictAttorney/>