

Life in prison without parole

Richesin handed sentence for two murders

By KATHRYN GILLICK
OF THE REGISTER-PAJARONIAN

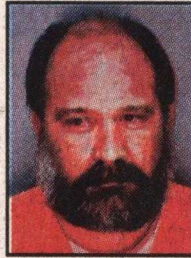
Visibly shaken and asking the judge for a minute to compose himself, Heather Nicole Pereira's brother addressed the court.

"Nothing against you, but I think the judicial system is a joke," David Garrison said to Judge Art Danner during the sentencing of his sister's killer. "This man should not be able to breathe another breath of air."

Turning to Dennis Lee Richesin, who sat between his two attor-

neys as he was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole Tuesday, Garrison said, "Justice will not be served until you are either dead or turned over to the families and myself."

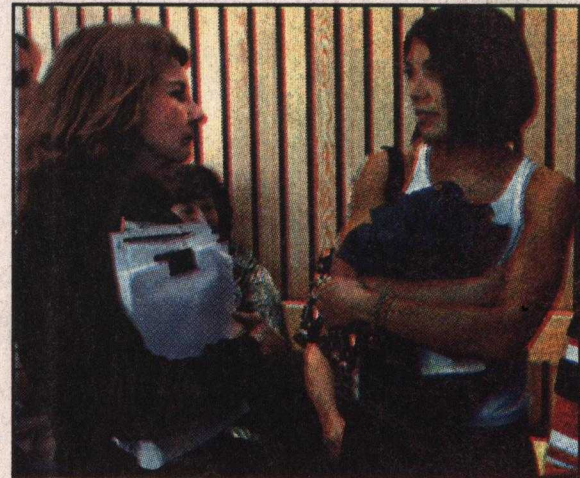
Richesin pleaded guilty to kill-



Richesin

ing Pereira and Kelly Ann Reber at separate times in 2000 and 2001. Pereira was allegedly killed sometime in August of 2000 after the two smoked methamphetamine together in Richesin's motor home at Seaclyff State Beach. Pereira, 25, allegedly asked Richesin for money and when he refused to give it to her, they began arguing. When she bent over to pick up a meth shard from the floor, Richesin allegedly hit her over the head with a fire extin-

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Assistant DA Christine McGuire (left) talks with Michelle Pereira, the sister of Heather Nicole Pereira, following Tuesday's court session in Santa Cruz.

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Register-Pajaronian



Kelly Ann Reber's aunt, Mary Reber, shows a photograph of Kelly outside the courtroom.

RICHESIN

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guisher and later buried her at Renaissance High School, where he was a teacher's aide.

Reber, 21, was killed on March 30, 2001. Like Pereira, she had been smoking methamphetamine with Richesin. Richesin allegedly dropped Reber off at his girlfriend's daughter's home. He then went and bought the drugs, according to a brief filed by the prosecution a few months ago. Once back at the house, Richesin, Reber and others smoked the methamphetamine.

According to the brief, Richesin's girlfriend Linda Vierra was up-

set about his relationship with Reber and threatened to kick him out the night of March 29. After the fight, Richesin allegedly took Reber to the school, where he hit her multiple times in the head with a rock. She was buried near Pereira.

While reading the sentence, Danner expressed sorrow for the families.

"For all the family and friends who've come here today, you've taken from them something very important to them," he said to Richesin. "You had no right to make a decision that will affect these people for the rest of their lives. To whatever extent you have remorse for what you've done, as you've expressed some, it's not enough."

Before the final sentencing, the victim's families made statements to the court about the girls' lives and showed videos of the young women.

"The miracle of Kelly's life is that she lived at all," said her uncle, Jim Reber. "She was born to two drug addicts and drug dealers ... Kelly was introduced to her killer by her mother. Kelly's best days were with her Aunt Mary and other family members."

Reber lived with her aunt, Mary Reber, for much of her life.

"I haven't had a real night's sleep since I learned that she was missing," Mary Reber said. "I want

him (Richesin) to be in misery as long as I have to be without her."

Jim Merchant, Pereira's father, was so overcome with emotion that he could hardly speak.

"I had all these things I was going to say today, but what do you say to a coward?" he said. "I had three beautiful daughters what feels like not that long ago, and now I have two. When I go to bed at night I worry that they are not going to be there because of you."

"I hate you and I will never be able to forgive you," he said, facing Richesin. "I hope you rot in hell. I hope your days in prison are

miserable. I hate you."

Pereira's sister, Michelle Pereira, said the girls always got together for Thanksgiving and Christmas.

"Did you think that my sister would go unnoticed?" she yelled at Richesin. "Did you think it would go unnoticed that she didn't come home for Christmas, that she didn't call at Thanksgiving?"

"They say actions speak louder than words," she said. "Your actions speak that you have no idea who God is, but unfortunately, God knows exactly who you are. You will never be forgiven. Not by us and not by God."