

Shooter gets life in Aptos restaurant slaying

murder
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Owner killed during Christmas Eve robbery

SANTA CRUZ — A Watsonville man will spend the rest of his life in prison after admitting to killing an Aptos restaurant owner during a robbery attempt on Christmas Eve.

Enrique Colin, 33, pleaded guilty to first-degree murder for shooting 40-year-old Shaokhoon "Sean" Koay once in the head and twice in the chest with a .380-caliber pistol while trying to rob the Pacific

ic Rim Buffet in Aptos Village.

Prosecutor Ariadne Symons said Colin had been at a nearby liquor store with a friend when he pulled up to the open back door of the restaurant, which had already closed for the night. He told his friend he would "be right back."

Symons said Colin went in, pointed his gun and

demanded money from Koay, his wife, Eriko Koay, and his father, 63-year-old Shang-Eng Koay.

Koay refused and pushed a restaurant cart at Colin, Symons said. Colin opened fire.

Shang-Eng Koay blocked Colin's escape, and in a struggle, Colin shot the older man three times. Shang-Eng Koay recovered, but Symons said one

10-23-03
gunshot wound to his arm was so bad he went back home to China with a bullet still in his arm, the shattered bone held together by metal braces.

Investigators eventually found Colin's friend, who said that as Colin drove from the scene, he was saying, "All this for \$20."

Investigators found ammunition in Colin's home similar to that used in the shooting. Finally, Monterey County deputies got into a gun battle with him after he holed up in a home on Hidden Valley

Please see **SLAYING** on **BACK PAGE**

A-10 SANTA CRUZ SENTINEL Wednesday, October 23, 2002

Slaying

Continued from Page A1

Road in North Monterey County. He fired at deputies, and was shot three times.

As part of a plea bargain, Symons has asked Monterey County prosecutors to dismiss the charges he faces from that shootout. She said Colin could withdraw his guilty plea if that prosecution proceeds. But, given the fact that Colin will never get out of prison, she is confident it won't.

Several probation-violation charges Colin faced in two domestic violence convictions also will be dismissed.

Deputy Public Defender Bill Weigel, said his client is remorseful about the shootings.

He said Colin was struggling with methamphetamine problems at the time, and after he was arrested and got clean, he realized the horror of what he had done.

Shaokhoon Koay, who was Chinese,

and Eriko Koay, who is Japanese, met in a cooking school in Paris, said inspector Joe Henard. They fell in love and moved to the Santa Cruz area and ran the restaurant for 13 years. Eriko Koay has closed the eatery permanently since her husband's death, not wanting to run it without him.

She still lives in the Santa Cruz area, but the case may have one more sad epilogue. Eriko Koay is not a naturalized U.S. citizen and has been in the country for the past 13 years on a work visa. Because she is no longer working, Symons said, the federal Immigration and Naturalization Service is seeking to revoke her visa and deport her to Japan.

INS spokeswoman Sharon Rumery said she knew nothing about the case, and said the INS cannot comment on specific cases.

Colin will be sentenced on Dec. 9.

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Enrique Colin confers with Public Defender Larry Biggam during his court appearance Tuesday. Colin pleaded guilty to the Christmas Eve slaying of the owner of an Aptos restaurant.

Bill Lovejoy/
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