

Case Brief
People v. Matsumoto

People v. Matsumoto is the trial of Bailey Matsumoto, the founder of a technology start-up that develops autonomous (self-driving) trucks. Bailey is charged with the murder of Bailey's spouse, Taylor Matsumoto.

The prosecution alleges that after Taylor's son Michael died in a tragic accident using one of Bailey's malfunctioning autonomous scooters, Taylor founded an organization called Parents Against Autonomous Driving (PAAD). Taylor's involvement in PAAD began to financially impact Bailey's autonomous truck company. The prosecution further argues that Bailey's and Taylor's relationship rapidly deteriorated. Just days before Taylor was set to testify in Washington, D.C., in support of a bill titled *National Moratorium on Autonomous Technologies*, Taylor was found dead, face down in Taylor's bathtub. The prosecution claims that Bailey murdered Taylor with premeditation in order to prevent Taylor from testifying and to stop PAAD from succeeding.

The prosecution claims that on the night of the alleged murder, Bailey provided an already inebriated Taylor with alcohol, then hit Taylor on the head with a golf club, later found in Bailey's car, causing Taylor to fall into the bathtub and drown. The prosecution claims Bailey intended to murder Taylor and make Taylor's death look like an accidental drowning. Desi, Bailey's cousin, placed Bailey in the master bathroom with Taylor the night before Taylor's body was found.

The defense argues that Taylor's death was not a murder but was instead an unfortunate accident. The defense argues that when Taylor arrived home the night before Taylor's body was found, Taylor was drunk and highly impaired from alcohol. Taylor proceeded to drink even more that evening and accidentally slipped on spilled champagne, hit Taylor's head on the bathtub trough, and drowned. According to the defense, the alleged weapon of the golf club had been in Bailey's car for days and could not have been used to strike Taylor. Bailey left the bathroom when Taylor was very much alive and did not return.

The pretrial issue involves the Fourth Amendment protection against unreasonable searches and seizures. There is a question of whether the detective's search of the office adjacent to Desi's guest house was constitutional. If the search was unconstitutional, a script written by Bailey with details matching some of the details of Taylor's death may not be used at trial.