



OFFICE OF THE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Stanislaus County
832 12th Street, Suite 300
Modesto, CA 95354
Mailing address: POB 442, Modesto, CA 95353
Telephone: (209) 525-5550 Fax: (209) 558-4027

Birgit Fladager
District Attorney
Carol Shipley
Assistant District Attorney
Chief Deputy District Attorneys
Jerry Begen
Alan Cassidy
Dave Harris

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: May 6, 2013
Re: Convicted Murderer Souliotes
Will Face Retrial for Killing Three

For More Information Contact:

Carol Shipley, Assistant District Attorney
Phone: (209) 525-5550

Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that convicted killer George Souliotes will be retried for the 1997 murders of 30-year-old Michelle Jones and her two children, Amanda, 3, and Daniel Jr., 6.

A jury in 1999 deadlocked 11-1 in favor of guilt. In 2000, a second jury convicted the former landlord. The conviction was upheld by California's Fifth District Court of Appeals in 2002; the California Supreme Court denied review in 2002 and then denied a petition for a writ of habeas corpus in 2006.

However, a federal court has now reversed that conviction. The court found that one of the area's most competent local defense attorneys was ineffective in his representation of Souliotes because the attorney made a tactical choice with the express consent of his client. Notwithstanding years of legal precedent preventing a reversal based on a lawyer's tactical decision, that federal court has remanded the case for a new trial. Although this order does grant a new trial, the basis is only that the attorney was found to be ineffective, not because the evidence of Souliotes's guilt was insufficient, or that Souliotes is innocent.

The California Attorney General's Office believes there is a very good chance that the order will be reversed and they are seeking appellate review. In the meantime, to comply with the federal court's order, Souliotes will be transferred back to Stanislaus County to face retrial. There is ample admissible evidence which compels a retrial of the defendant for the murders of a mother and her two young children.