



Office of the District Attorney Stanislaus County

Birgit Fladager
District Attorney

Assistant District Attorney
David P. Harris

Chief Deputies
Annette Rees
Marlisa Ferreira
Stephen R. Robinson
Jeffrey M. Laugero
Jeff Mangar

Bureau of Investigation
Chief Terry L. Seese

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: February 3, 2020
Re: Ruth Anna Willmon
Convicted Killer Denied release

For More Information Contact:

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

Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Ruth Anna Willmon, age 72, of Modesto, was found unsuitable for expanded medical parole during a January 29, 2020, hearing of the State Board of Parole Hearings held at the Central California Women's Facility in Chowchilla, Ca. Chief Deputy District Attorney Jeff Mangar appeared at the hearing and argued for Willmon's continued confinement based upon her current dangerousness to the community, continued mental health problems and lack of viable parole plans. The Board of Parole Hearings agreed and denied parole for three years.

On January 14, 1986, Willmon became enraged over the fact that her ex-husband, 46-year-old James Lee Willmon, was dating another woman. Willmon had hoped she and her husband would reconcile and get back together. When it became obvious that would not happen, Willmon obtained a .357 magnum revolver and shot her ex-husband in the chest, killing him. She was convicted of second-degree murder with use of a firearm and sentenced to serve 16 years-to-life in state prison.

Willmon suffers from an extreme and violent psychosis that has not been alleviated by taking anti-psychotic medications. Since being in prison, she has assaulted other inmates several times, most recently in February 2019. Willmon also uses her hand to simulate a gun and points at staff while threatening to kill them and shouting, "Bang! Bang!"

The idea of "expanded medical parole" was created by the state legislature as a result of a federal lawsuit. Under "expanded" medical parole, inmates are sent to medical treatment facilities instead of prison institutions. Chief Prosecutor Jeff Mangar successfully argued at the hearing that Willmon's continuing assaults, threats and other bizarre behavior posed a threat to the physical safety of staff and treatment professionals if she were to be released to a less structured setting.

Willmon had previously been denied parole in 2016 and will be scheduled for another hearing in three years although, under certain circumstances, the Board can accelerate it to as soon as next year.

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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



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