



Office of the District Attorney Stanislaus County

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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: October 9, 2020
Re: William Shawn Sturges
Prison inmate granted parole

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Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that William Shawn Sturges, age 45, of Modesto, was granted parole during an October 1, 2020, hearing of the State Board of Parole Hearings held at Corcoran State Prison. Deputy District Attorney Dannica Molina appeared at the hearing on behalf of the People.

In 1999, Sturges committed a string of armed robberies in Stanislaus and Tuolumne counties during a one-week span. Initially, Sturges targeted convenience stores and entered each one, armed with a handgun, and demanded money from the clerk. Before leaving the stores, Sturges would also steal packs of cigarettes.

On April 5, 1999, Sturges and his girlfriend entered the Wells Fargo Bank in Oakdale. Sturges displayed a revolver while his girlfriend demanded money from the bank teller. The couple left the bank with approximately \$5,000. Sturges was identified, arrested and ultimately convicted of four counts of armed robbery and possession of a weapon in jail. He was sentenced to serve 27 years and four months in state prison.

While in custody, Sturges associated with white supremacist groups and stabbed another inmate in 2003. In 2005, he was convicted of battery on a peace officer and sentenced to an additional two years. He received an additional 11 years for robbery out of Tuolumne county. Sturges had previously served four years in state prison for a 1996 residential burglary. He also had a lengthy juvenile history starting at age 14 and had been committed to the California Youth Authority in 1992 for residential burglary and auto theft.

Sturges was 24 years old at the time of the robberies. Despite his extensive serious and violent criminal history resulting in a lengthy prison sentence, committing additional crimes while in prison custody and repeatedly violating prison rules, his age qualified him as a "Youthful Offender" eligible for early parole consideration.

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During the hearing, Deputy District Attorney Molina argued against Sturges's release on parole based on the violent nature of his crimes, his history of substance abuse, his commission of new crimes while in prison and 25 prison rules violations between 2000 and 2018. Deputy District Attorney Molina also argued that a 2019 psychological evaluation of Sturges gave the opinion that Sturges still posed a moderate risk to the community if he were to be released on parole. In that interview with the prison psychologist, Sturges admitted to selling heroin and methamphetamine to other inmates but stopping in 2011 or 2012.

The Board deliberated for approximately 20 minutes before granting Sturges parole. In reaching their decision, the Board considered Sturges's "Youthful Offender" status, and thought that his parole plans were organized and well-defined and that he testified honestly before the Board.

This was Sturges's first and only parole hearing since going to prison in 1999.

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