



Office of the District Attorney Stanislaus County

Birgit Fladager
District Attorney

Assistant District Attorney
David P. Harris

Chief Deputies
Annette Rees
Douglas K. Raynaud
Marlisa Ferreira
Stephen R. Robinson

Bureau of Investigation
Lt. David Hutchinson
Lt. Froilan Mariscal

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: November 16, 2018
Re: Benson Robert Neal
Convicted killer granted parole

For More Information Contact:

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

Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Benson Robert Neal, age 68, of Modesto was found suitable for parole during a November 8, 2018, hearing of the State Board of Parole Hearings held at California State Prison, Solano. Deputy District Attorney Tracy Roland appeared at the hearing on behalf of the People.

On June 6, 1982, Neal, Frank Aleo, Frank Ford and Sharon Poma all decided to rob victim Dixon Flinders at his Modesto home. They went to Flinders's home and announced themselves as Drug Enforcement agents. When Flinders would not open his door, they kicked it in. Frank Ford, using a gun Neal had given to him, fired a single round from a .22 caliber revolver into Flinders's chest, killing him. Neal and his cohorts then ransacked the home expecting to find large amounts of cash, yet they came away with only some seashells, a cassette player, rifle, and \$100.00

Neal was subsequently convicted of first degree murder while armed with a firearm, burglary and robbery. He was sentenced to 26 years to life in state prison. In 2000, he was convicted of possessing heroin in prison.

At the hearing on November 8th, prosecutor Roland argued to the Board that Neal should not be released, citing his lack of insight into why he committed the crime and his lack of awareness of the factors which could lead to his committing further crimes of violence in the future. The Board of Parole Hearings disagreed and granted parole, finding that Neal was not an unreasonable risk to public safety.

This was Neal's eighth parole hearing. He had been denied parole on seven previous occasions, the most recent being a three-year denial in July of 2017. However, under recent changes in the law, Neal was able to advance his hearing to November of this year.

Co-defendant Frank Joseph Aleo, age 73, is still serving a prison sentence, having previously been denied parole four times. His next hearing date is currently set for February 13, 2019.

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