



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
Steve R. Robinson

Bureau of Investigation
Lt. David Hutchinson
Lt. Froilan Mariscal

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: February 20, 2019
Re: Stephen Curtis Mendonca
Convicted killer denied 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 Stephen Curtis Mendonca, age 53, of Ceres, was found unsuitable for parole during a February 12, 2019, hearing of the State Board of Parole Hearings held at Mule Creek State Prison in Ione. Deputy District Attorney Jeff Mangar appeared at the hearing and successfully argued against Mendonca's release.

On Superbowl Sunday in January of 1989, Mendonca and a co-defendant drove victim Kenny Stewart to a remote location in Keyes under the pretext they were going to use drugs together when they were really going to kill the victim over a money dispute. Once at the orchard, Mendonca pushed the victim to the ground and put a coat over his head. The co-defendant then shot the victim and handed the handgun to Mendonca, who shot Stewart in the head, killing him. At the time of the murder, Mendonca was on parole for armed robbery and possession of heroin for sale.

In June of 1991, Mendonca was convicted of second-degree murder and sentenced to serve 15 years-to-life in state prison. While he has been in custody, Mendonca has also been convicted of possession of a weapon, manufacturing a deadly weapon, arson, assault with a deadly weapon, battery on a peace officer, and violating prison rules by fighting, threatening staff, refusing to perform his job assignment, and disobeying a direct order. For his additional crimes Mendonca was sentenced to an additional 20 years to run consecutive to his life term.

At the parole hearing, prosecutor Mangar pointed out that since 2007 Mendonca has refused to get his high school GED, participate in any psychological evaluations, attend self-help programming, maintain a vocation, continue to attend substance abuse counseling, or voluntarily take his prescribed antipsychotic medications. A prison forensic psychologist assessed Mendonca as having a high risk for violence and reoffending if released due to his being emotionally, behaviorally and mentally unstable. Mangar requested that parole be denied and Mendonca remain in prison custody. The Board agreed and denied parole for 5 years.

Mendonca will be scheduled for another hearing in 2024 but may apply to advance his hearing to next year due to recent legislative changes to the law making him a “youthful offender” since he was 23 years old at the time of the murder.

Mendonca has previously been denied parole in 2008 and 2013.

###