



# Office of the District Attorney Stanislaus County

**Birgit Fladager**  
District Attorney

**Assistant District Attorney**  
Jeffrey M. Laugero

**Chief Deputies**  
Marlisa Ferreira  
Wendell Emerson  
Michael D. Houston  
Mark Zahner

**Bureau of Investigation**  
Chief Terry L. Seese

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **For Immediate Release**

Date: September 28, 2022  
Re: Spurgeon Bland, Jr.  
Conviction of Assault with a deadly weapon

### **For More Information Contact:**

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

Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Spurgeon Bland, Jr., age 37, of Modesto has been sentenced to 19 years in state prison after being convicted of assault with a deadly weapon. Deputy District Attorney Vita Palazuelos prosecuted the case on behalf of the People.

On August 18, 2021, Bland was walking to his uncle's house when he got into a verbal argument with 19-year-old Alejandro Padilla. Without lawful provocation, Bland stabbed Padilla six times including once in the neck. Padilla suffered life-threatening injuries and was transported to the hospital for treatment.

Bland fled the scene but was later found at a gas station a few miles away and arrested. Bland claimed he did not stab anyone and was not at the crime scene. He was arrested and charged with the crime as well as having previously been convicted of robbery in 2005 and attempted arson in 2018, both of which counted as serious felony prior convictions and "strikes" under California's Three Strikes law which made Bland eligible for a 25 years-to-life prison sentence.

After a two-week jury trial, a Stanislaus County Superior Court jury convicted Bland on March 16, 2022 of assault with a deadly weapon along with an enhancement for causing great bodily injury. The jury also found true both of his prior serious felony and "strike" convictions.

On June 1, 2022, the defense made a motion asking the judge to dismiss one of Bland's prior strike convictions in order to avoid the mandatory 25 years-to-life sentence under California's "Three Strikes" Law. The defense noted that even though Bland's use of force did not arise to lawful self-defense, trial testimony showed the victim had been the initial aggressor in the verbal argument and pointed out that Bland's prior robbery conviction occurred 17 years ago.

Prosecutor Palazuelos opposed the motion, noting that Bland had not done anything to change his continuing extensive criminality that included bringing drugs into the jail in 2019, attempted arson in 2018, felony domestic violence in 2013 and a previous assault with a deadly weapon in 2012.

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](http://www.stanislaus-da.org)



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At sentencing on September 14<sup>th</sup>, Judge Reeves granted the defense request to dismiss the prior robbery “strike” allegation, citing the defendant’s difficult social upbringing and the 17-year intervening period since that crime. Reeves then sentenced Bland to serve three years for the assault with a deadly weapon conviction, which was doubled to six years using the prior attempted arson “strike” conviction, plus an additional three years for causing great bodily injury and another 10 years for having two prior serious felony convictions for a total sentence of 19 years in state prison.

Bland is currently in custody at the Stanislaus County jail awaiting transportation to the California Department of Corrections.

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