



# Office of the District Attorney Stanislaus County

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## PRESS RELEASE

### For Immediate Release

Date: May 1, 2023  
Re: Michael Steven Earl  
"Three Strikes" Inmate Denied Parole

### For More Information Contact:

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**Modesto, California** - Stanislaus County District Attorney Jeff Laugero announced today that Michael Steven Earl, age 64, of Modesto was found unsuitable for parole during a March 8, 2023, hearing of the State Board of Parole Hearings held at the California Medical Facility in Vacaville. Deputy District Attorney Holly MacKinnon appeared at the hearing on behalf of the People.

In August of 1996, when Earl was 37 years old, he broke into his friend's mother's home, ransacked her bedroom and stole her purse along with a bottle of prescription medication. He was seen running away from the home, jumping the backyard fence, and discarding his clothes as he fled to prevent being identified. At the time of his arrest, Earl had cases pending for inflicting corporal injury on a spouse, felon in possession of a firearm, and escape.

Prior to this crime, Earl's extensive criminal history included serious felony convictions for robbery, obstructing a peace officer, receiving stolen property, substituting fraudulent controlled substance for sale, obtaining money by false pretenses, and grand theft from a person. He had also served numerous prior terms in state prison.

On September 4, 1996, pursuant to a negotiated disposition, Earl entered a no contest plea to residential burglary. In exchange for this plea, the felony cases for inflicting corporal injury on a spouse, felon in possession of a firearm and escape were dismissed. His prior serious and violent felony convictions were then used to increase his sentence to 25 years to life in state prison under California's "Three Strikes" law.

Since going to prison this time, Earl has repeatedly violated institutional rules on more than twenty occasions including committing theft, unauthorized possession of medication, possession of controlled medications, obstructing an officer in the performance of their duties, refusal to provide urinalysis, mutual combat, and disrespect to staff.

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A prison psychologist who examined Earl prior to the parole hearing gave the opinion that Earl still posed a high risk for future violence if he were to be released into the community. The psychologist found Earl's inability to maintain his sobriety for any extended period of time was concerning, stating that it reflected Earl's continuing, ongoing problem with substance addiction and an inability to control his anti-social behavioral compulsions.

During the hearing on March 8<sup>th</sup>, Prosecutor MacKinnon asked the Board to deny parole, arguing that Earl needed more time in custody to attend and complete additional self-help, educational and vocational programming. MacKinnon also pointed out that Earl's inadequate parole plans coupled with his lack of sustained sobriety and participation in substance abuse treatment made him an unreasonable risk of danger to the community if he were to be released from prison.

After deliberations, the Board denied parole for five years, stating that, although Earl had shown progress in some areas, his extensive criminal history, which continued in prison, and lack of internalization of the limited amount of programming he had done weighed against his suitability for parole. The Board stated Earl still minimized his responsibility and showed no remorse for his multiple victims. They found Earl needed to improve on his parole plans, including developing a cohesive relapse prevention plan and needed to participate in more targeted criminal thinking and substance abuse treatment.

This was Earl's first actual parole hearing. He previously continued or waived his right to a hearing in 2019, 2020, and 2021. Due to his age, he is eligible for elder parole consideration and may petition the Board to advance his hearing earlier than in five years should his circumstances support it.

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