



# Office of the District Attorney Stanislaus County

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **For Immediate Release**

Date: March 4, 2024  
Re: Jose Manuel Fajardo  
Murderer denied parole

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

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Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Jeff Laugero announced today that Jose Manuel Fajardo, 42 years old, of Modesto was found unsuitable for parole at a February 9, 2024 hearing of the State Board of Parole Hearings in San Quentin. Special Prosecutor Beth De Jong appeared at the hearing and argued for continued confinement based on the present risk of danger he poses to society, his lack of candor to the Board and his failure to provide insight. The Board of Parole denied parole for five years.

On August 28, 2013, at 12:42 a.m., Stanislaus County Sheriff's Department were dispatched to a home on South Santa Ana Avenue, in Modesto. Upon arrival, deputies contacted Fajardo, who had just stabbed his wife, Marlene, 70 times. Fortunately, their two children, ages 9 and 5, slept through the savage attack and were not witnesses to this brutal killing. Beth De Jong prosecuted the case and on October 13, 2015, Fajardo was found guilty of second-degree murder and use of a knife, by a jury. He was sentenced to 16 years to life.

Fajardo never gave a statement to the police and did not testify at trial. Today, in the hearing, he stated that he formed the intent to kill her earlier that day and hid a knife in the laundry hamper. He waited until she was asleep in bed then attacked. At one point during the attack, his knife bent, hitting one of her ribs, making the knife unusable. He retreated to the kitchen to obtain a second knife and resumed his savagery.

Board Commissioners questioned Fajardo, at great length, about his domestic violence history. He minimized his "very disturbing pattern of violence" and control in his marriage. The Board cited his lack of candor and insight as reasons for denial of parole.

Specifically, Fajardo stated his intention was to kill his wife and himself. However, when asked what attempts he made to kill himself, he concocted an unbelievable story. He stated after he butchered his wife, he entered the master bathroom and turned on the water in the tub to possibly drown himself. However, when police arrived at the home, the bathroom door had to be removed from the hinges as even the Fire Department could not open the door, as Marlene's body was on the ground blocking entry.

Also, during the hearing, Fajardo repeatedly emphasized that, before this crime, he had only committed mental and emotional abuse of Marlene, and nothing physical. He was then confronted with previous trial facts whereby a witness stated Marlene confided in her that he tried to rape her. It was not until after he was confronted with this testimony that he changed his answer to the questions posed by the Board. By not being forthcoming with the truth it was argued that proper insight has not occurred.

Additionally, Fajardo has continued his “criminal thinking” by participating in fraudulent activity involving his restitution obligations. To avoid payment, he has repeatedly requested his family members put money in other cellmates’ accounts to avoid deductions for restitution and to maximize his canteen purchase ability.

The victim’s brothers, father, and sister-in-law attended the hearing. They each implored the Board to deny parole. Each of Marlene’s family members provided emotion-evoking impact statements that begged the Board to keep Marlene’s kids safe, and the community.

Fajardo will next be eligible for a parole hearing in 2029, unless he seeks an “advance” of his hearing.

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