



# Office of the District Attorney Stanislaus County

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## PRESS RELEASE

### For Immediate Release

Date: March 4, 2024  
Re: Jesus Antonio Felix  
Convicted Killer Denied Parole

### For More Information Contact:

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**Modesto, California** - Stanislaus County District Attorney Jeff Laugero announced today that Jesus Antonio Felix, 65 years of age, was found unsuitable for parole at a January 25, 2024 hearing of the State Board of Parole Hearings at the California Institution for Men in Chino, California. Deputy District Attorney Margot L. Roen appeared at the hearing and argued for continued confinement based on Felix's lack of credibility and insight into his life crime, as well as the fact that he had yet to demonstrate a lengthy period of positive rehabilitation. The Board of Parole Hearings agreed and denied parole for five years.

On September 15, 1988, Felix and his codefendant, John Moses Ruiz, went to a motel room at the Modesto Inn to buy drugs. When they knocked on the door, a man named Jorge Ortiz answered. Felix asked for "coke," and Ortiz went to a drawer, where he picked up a baggie containing a white substance that he brought to the doorway. After drugs and money were exchanged, Felix and Ruiz attempted to push the door open and barge into the room. Ortiz and a companion, Daniel Venegas, attempted to push the door shut. During the struggle, a gunshot was fired through the door, striking Ortiz in the chest. Felix then entered the room and pointed a gun at Venegas. After exchanging words, Felix shot Venegas in the chest. Felix and Ruiz then fled. Ruiz was seen fleeing with a rifle and Felix was seen putting an object believed to be a handgun in his waistband. Ortiz died from his gunshot wound, but Venegas survived.

On October 7, 1988, both Felix and Ruiz were charged with murder with malice aforethought, along with an enhancement for use of a handgun during the murder by Felix and a rifle by Ruiz. Felix and Ruiz were also charged with the attempted murder of Daniel Venegas, with an enhancement for acting intentionally, deliberately and with premeditation, as well as enhancements for personal use of a firearm, and for the infliction of great bodily injury upon Venegas. In addition, Felix and Ruiz were charged with robbery and burglary, along with these same enhancements. A preliminary hearing was held from December 19, 1988 through December 21, 1988, and Felix and Ruiz were both held to answer the charges. On February 21, 1989, Felix pled guilty to second degree murder and admitted that, during the commission of the murder, he personally used a handgun. Felix was sentenced to seventeen years to life with the possibility of parole.

At the hearing before the Parole Board, the Board questioned Felix about his recent involvement in gang activity and drug use while in prison. The Board spent a significant amount of time discussing Felix's substance abuse issues – both past and present – and found particularly troubling the fact that Felix had used money he had earned as a young boy in Mexico to buy drugs instead of helping his family members, who were struggling to afford food. The Board also found that Felix lacked credibility, not only regarding the details of the life crime (he was still denying actually shooting Venegas), but because he admitted lying to his family to get money to buy drugs while incarcerated. When presented with a question by Deputy District Attorney Roen about the 12 Steps, Felix fumbled, despite having attended numerous AA and NA programs throughout his years in prison. The Board viewed this as a failure by Felix to take AA and NA seriously and to internalize the 12 Steps, which it found very concerning considering that drugs were at the center of his life crime.

After deliberations, the Board denied parole for five years and told Felix that this length of time was necessary in order to address his negative institutional behavior (Felix had thirty one serious rules violations, seventeen of which were drug related), some of which was fairly recent and directly connected to the crimes he committed. Felix was advised to engage in more programming, specifically regarding substance abuse and gang related behavior, and to better develop his parole plans.

This was Felix's seventh parole hearing. At his last parole hearing on January 6, 2021, Felix stipulated to unsuitability for a three year period in order to allow himself time for further rehabilitation and preparation. Felix will be eligible for another hearing in 2029, although he may petition the Board of Parole Hearings to advance that date if he can demonstrate a change in circumstances.

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