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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: March 4, 2024
Re: Jesse Alfredo Origel
Murderer Denied Parole

For More Information Contact:

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Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Jeff Laugero announced today that Jesse Alfredo Origel, 41 years old, of Modesto was found unsuitable for parole at a February 6, 2024 hearing of the State Board of Parole Hearings at Valley State Prison in Chowchilla. Deputy District Attorney Victoria Vasquez appeared at the hearing and argued for continued confinement. The Board of Parole Hearings denied Inmate Origel parole for three years.

On December 22, 2000, after stealing beer from the store clerk at the River Road Market, Origel and two friends went to drink by the train trestles. As Origel and his friends were talking, someone from across the river yelled out for them to quiet down. Origel stated he wanted to beat someone up. Origel and his friends walked over to the area where they believe someone had yelled out. Shortly after, John Michael Tracey arrived and heard that Origel and his friends were runaways. Mr. Tracey attempted to show Origel and his friends a good place to take shelter.

During the hearing, Origel stated he observed an axe nearby when Mr. Tracey was showing them the area and Origel took the axe and stayed behind Mr. Tracey to catch Mr. Tracey unaware.

In a statement to the prison psychologist in 2023, Origel stated he hit Mr. Tracey in the head after Mr. Tracey had his back towards Origel. Then when Mr. Tracey turned to look at Origel, Origel hit Mr. Tracey again.

At the hearing, Origel stated he did not strike Mr. Tracey until Mr. Tracey turned and smiled at him. Origel then said he struck Mr. Tracey's face with the axe 10 times. Origel also explained how he threw his bloody sweatshirt, his gloves and the axe into the river and went to a friend's house after he left Mr. Tracey at the scene.

On January 17, 2002, Origel pled guilty to the second degree murder of John Michael Tracey. The Honorable John Griffin, Jr. sentenced Origel to 15 years to life on February 20, 2002.

While in prison, Origel has possessed multiple inmate-made weapons, engaged in at least one documented fight, and possessed controlled substances. When questioned if he had had any violations in prison for which he was not disciplined, Origel admitted to having an additional two fights that were not recorded, possessed a cell phone, passed drugs, and used the phones when it was not his authorized time. In 2021, Origel was counseled about using a phone when it was not his scheduled time.

Several family members of Mr. Tracey attended the parole hearing via teleconferencing and others submitted written statements indicating concerns about Origel's sudden rush to violence, Origel's callous murder of their family member and worries of what could or would occur if Origel was released into the community.

The Board found Origel would be an unreasonable risk of danger to society if released despite the prison psychologist's findings that Origel presented a Lower Moderate Risk of reoffending and the great weight afforded Origel as he qualifies for consideration as a youthful offender, having committed his offense when he was 18 years old.

The Board said Origel needed to have a deeper understanding of the programming that he has completed as there is a concern that given his present mental state he may revert and reoffend. Origel's continued criminality despite his rehabilitation courses in the last few years also reflected Origel's willingness to circumvent court ordered processes, i.e. assisting others with avoiding payment of their restitution orders in 2019. The Commissioner applauded Origel's participation in his coursework, but added that Origel himself said he had not taken the programming seriously until September of 2023.

Origel has had two prior parole hearings held before this February date. In 2015, Origel refused to appear at his hearing and waived his hearing for five years. In 2020, Origel did not appear again and submitted a stipulation for a three year waiver. In 2023, Origel postponed his parole hearing. While this was the first time that Origel appeared before the Board, this was Origel's second actual parole hearing. Origel may petition the Board for an earlier date if there is a change in circumstances.

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