



# Office of the District Attorney Stanislaus County

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **For Immediate Release**

Date: March 7, 2024  
Re: Steven Curtis Mendonca  
Murderer Denied Parole

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

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Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Jeff Laugero announced today that Steven Curtis Mendonca, 58 years old, of Ceres was found unsuitable for parole at a January 3, 2024 hearing of the State Board of Parole Hearings at California Correctional Institution in Tehachapi. Deputy District Attorney Victoria Vasquez appeared at the hearing and argued for continued confinement based on inmate Mendonca's extensive rules violations in prison, his lack of significant programming and his criminal history. The Board of Parole Hearings denied Inmate Mendonca parole for seven years.

On Superbowl Sunday in January of 1989, Mendonca and a co-defendant drove victim Kenny Stewart to a remote location in Keyes under the pretext they were going to use drugs together when they were really going to kill the victim over a money dispute. Once at the orchard, Mendonca pushed the victim to the ground and put a coat over his head. The co-defendant then shot the victim and handed the handgun to Mendonca, who shot Stewart in the head, killing him. At the time of the murder, Mendonca was on parole for armed robbery and possession of heroin for sale.

In June of 1991, Mendonca pled guilty to the second-degree murder of Mr. Stewart and was sentenced to serve 15 years-to-life in state prison.

Since Mendonca's last parole hearing in 2019, Mendonca has continued to violate prison rules with two incidents of fighting (the last incident in December of 2022) and one incident of committing battery with a deadly weapon on a fellow inmate. During his incarceration, Mendonca has committed a total of twenty rules violations in prison which include multiple incidents of fighting, possession of dangerous weapons, battery on a fellow inmate, battery on a peace officer, and threats of violence.

The Board found Mendonca, who refused to attend his parole hearing and meet with the prison psychologist, would be an unreasonable risk of danger to society if released. The Board afforded Mendonca great weight in consideration of the fact his offense occurred while he was 23 (as required by youthful offender statute). However, the Board found Mendonca had a lengthy juvenile

and adult history before the instant offense, had insufficient programming, extremely serious conduct while in prison, and lacked signs of offender change to support he was not an unreasonable risk to public safety.

This was Mendonca's third parole suitability hearing and he may petition the Board for an earlier date if there is a change in circumstances.

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