



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY

COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

DAN DOW
District Attorney

ERIC J. DOBROTH
Assistant District Attorney

JERRET C. GRAN
Chief Deputy District Attorney

SHERYL M. WOLCOTT
Chief Deputy District Attorney

LISA B. MUSCARI
Chief Deputy District Attorney

TERRY O' FARRELL
Chief, Bureau of Investigation

June 1, 2021

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor of California
1303 10th St. Suite 1173
Sacramento, California 95814

Re: Inmate Royce Elliott Casey K78120

Dear Governor Newsom:

This letter is written regarding the grant of parole on March 17, 2021 to the above inmate, who was convicted in 1997 for the 1995 murder of 15-year-old Elyse Pahler of Arroyo Grande, California. We ask that you exercise your authority pursuant to Penal Code Section 3041 and reverse the grant of parole to inmate Casey, as he remains a threat to public safety.

Elyse Pahler was sadistically murdered in July 1995 by inmate Casey and two crime partners who remain imprisoned. Casey was 17, and his crime partners Jacob Delashmutt and Joseph Fiorella were 16 and 15 years old, as was Elyse. The murder was accomplished by first luring the girl to a remote area, then strangling her, stabbing her multiple times, and finally by stomping on her head and neck. She bled to death. Her body was hidden in brush and not found until inmate Casey, feeling guilty, came forward 8 months later and confessed. He implicated the other two. All three entered pleas of first-degree murder and they were each sentenced to 25 years-to-life. Special circumstances of torture and rape were dismissed.

The motive was that the perpetrators, who had a rock band called "Hatred," thought by killing a virginal girl and sacrificing her to Satan, that their death metal music would be enhanced. As outlandish as this sounds, it is what they told law enforcement authorities. There was also a sexual motive to the killing as they discussed killing a virgin. However, there was insufficient proof that she was raped during her murder, mostly because her mummified remains could not yield forensic evidence.

Inmate Casey has been relatively well behaved in prison and has done some programming in the 25 years of incarceration. He was 17 at the time of the crime, a youthful offender, but it was not an impulsive crime. This horrific crime of murder was planned and discussed months in advance. Inmate Casey was also from a good home with a normal loving family. He has never adequately explained why he participated in such a sadistic and heinous

Re: Inmate Royce Elliott Casey K78120

crime. In prior hearings, he did admit that while young Elyse was on the ground, after being strangled and stabbed, she cried out for her mother and for Jesus. When Royce Casey heard that, he stomped on her neck and head.

It is our position that the parole panel on March 17 basically disregarded and gave inadequate weight to the horrific crime this inmate committed and looked instead at Casey's behavior in prison. In fact, there was little discussion of his crime in the March 2021 hearing. These Commissioners did not correctly follow the law. We maintain that Casey still has not developed insight into the character defects that allowed him to participate in such a hideous crime, and we ask that you review the case of *In re Shaputis* (2011) 53 Cal. 4th 192, which held that the presence or absence of insight is a significant factor in determining whether there is a 'rational nexus' between the inmate's dangerous past behavior and the threat he currently poses to public safety.

We ask that you review the case carefully and use your authority to reverse this incorrect and improvident grant of parole.

Very truly yours,



Dan Dow
District Attorney
County of San Luis Obispo