

INDETERMINATE SENTENCE PAROLE RELEASE REVIEW
(Penal Code Section 3041.2)

JASON GREENWELL, [REDACTED]
Second Degree Murder

AFFIRM: _____

MODIFY: _____

REVERSE: _____ X _____

STATEMENT OF FACTS

In 2010, Jason Greenwell, while high on a methamphetamine binge, and his four crime partners kidnapped, assaulted, and burned the 15-year-old female victim, killing her. Mr. Greenwell held her down while three of his crime partners beat her with their fists, stomped on her head, hit her legs with a bat, and tied a rope around her. Mr. Greenwell and three of the crime partners then drove to a remote location where they put her body in a ditch and set it on fire.

DECISION

As required by youth offender laws, in making this decision, I have considered the fact that Mr. Greenwell committed this crime when he was 20 years old and that he faced adverse childhood experiences, including physical and emotional abuse, that shaped his life and choices. I gave great weight to all the factors relevant to his diminished culpability as a youthful offender, including his impulsivity and other hallmark features of youth.

I acknowledge that Mr. Greenwell has since been incarcerated for nearly 13 years. I carefully examined the record for evidence demonstrating Mr. Greenwell's increased maturity and rehabilitation. I have also given great weight to Mr. Greenwell's subsequent growth in prison during my consideration of his suitability for parole. He has participated in self-help programming, earned an associate's degree, and completed a vocation. He has also maintained an exemplary disciplinary record. However, these factors are outweighed by negative factors that demonstrate he remains unsuitable for parole at this time.

In 2022, I reversed Mr. Greenwell's 2021 parole grant based in part on his gaps in insight. I concluded that Mr. Greenwell needed to develop greater insight into the causative factors of this crime, and deepen his understanding of his triggers for substance abuse and its nexus to his violent conduct.

Since that reversal, Mr. Greenwell credibly reports maintaining his sobriety and developed his relapse prevention plans. He completed additional substance use prevention coursework, including exploring the nexus between his childhood trauma and past antisocial conduct. I commend Mr. Greenwell's continued rehabilitative efforts and encourage him to continue on this positive path, however, I find that he must do additional work before he can be safely released.

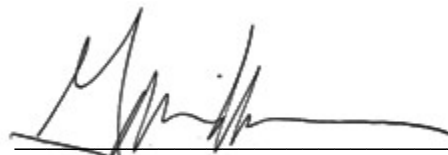
At his 2023 hearing, the Board asked Mr. Greenwell why he had participated in the life crime with people he had only known for a week. Mr. Greenwell discussed his need for acceptance, his substance abuse, and his low self-esteem. He stated, "I just wanted to be accepted by anyone at that point. I mean, I felt so like alone at that point. . . I didn't have anybody. So I just, any acceptance at that point was better than no acceptance." The Board asked Mr. Greenwell about his plans to avoid antisocial peers in the community. He responded, "Just to avoid them, I mean, at all costs."

Mr. Greenwell's plan for avoiding antisocial peers, while no doubt sincere, demonstrates a lack of understanding of the affirmative work that is required to develop prosocial community support systems, which will be critically important to his success on parole. It will take more than mere avoidance. I encourage Mr. Greenwell to further develop his support systems and plans for developing positive community ties. Without these supports, Mr. Greenwell will be at risk for relapse and will have challenges navigating the stressors he is certain to face in a prosocial way. Until he does this additional work, I find that Mr. Greenwell's release is not consistent with public safety.

CONCLUSION

I have considered the evidence in the record that is relevant to whether Mr. Greenwell is currently dangerous. When considered as a whole, I find the evidence shows that he currently poses an unreasonable danger to society if released from prison at this time. Therefore, I reverse the decision to parole Mr. Greenwell.

Decision Date:
September 14, 2023



GAVIN NEWSOM
Governor, State of California