

INDETERMINATE SENTENCE PAROLE RELEASE REVIEW
(Penal Code Section 3041.2)

ROYCE CASEY, K-78120

First Degree Murder

AFFIRM: _____

MODIFY: _____

REVERSE: _____ **X** _____

STATEMENT OF FACTS

In 1995, Royce Casey and his two juvenile crime partners made plans to kill their 15-year-old friend, then dismember, sexually violate, and cannibalize her body as part of a satanic ritual.

The crime partners strangled and stabbed the victim, and Mr. Casey stabbed her and then stomped on her head and neck, killing her. The crime partners did not carry out their other plans, and instead dragged the victim's body and attempted to hide it under leaves before fleeing.

DECISION

In the cases of parole applicants who commit their crimes when they are under 26 years old, I am required to review the record for evidence of factors relevant to their diminished culpability as youthful offenders. Mr. Casey committed this crime when he was 17 years old. At the time of the crime, Mr. Casey demonstrated hallmark features of youth, which diminished his culpability under youth offender laws. The psychologist who evaluated Mr. Casey in 2022 concluded that, at the time of his crime, Mr. Casey exhibited hallmark features of youth, writing, "There were some indications of impetuous and rash decision-making and recklessness in his behavior both prior to and during the commitment offense. He was also likely susceptible to negative peer influence at the time of the life crime from his crime partners."

I have also examined the record for evidence of Mr. Casey's subsequent growth and increased maturity since his life crime as set forth in youth offender laws. He has been incarcerated for nearly 28 years. Mr. Casey has made efforts to improve himself in prison. He has engaged in self-help programming to address his risk factors. He has not been disciplined in more than 20 years and reports maintaining sobriety throughout his incarceration. He has earned his GED and

an associate degree and completed extensive vocational training. I commend him for taking these steps, and I encourage him to continue on this positive path.

After assessing Mr. Casey's record and giving great weight to the relevant youthful offender factors, however, I conclude that these mitigating factors are outweighed by negative factors that demonstrate he remains unsuitable for parole at this time.

In July 2021, I reversed the Board's March 2021 parole recommendation in Mr. Casey's case because Mr. Casey had not yet demonstrated that he had the insight and skills needed to maintain healthy relationships in the community. Following this parole reversal, Mr. Casey demonstrated increased insight into his risk factor for negative peer association and susceptibility to peer pressure, and I acknowledge that he has shown genuine remorse. While I commend Mr. Casey for taking this step forward in his rehabilitation, I have concluded that he must do additional work before he can be safely released.

Mr. Casey must better understand the internal processes that led him to commit the crime and hone the skills he will need to manage them beyond the controlled environment of prison. Mr. Casey will almost certainly encounter significant stressors while navigating his reentry into the community if he is allowed to parole, particularly given the stigma and notoriety of his case. I encourage him to continue to develop his parole plans, and in particular his relapse prevention plans and the strength of his social supports, which will be critical to his success on parole.

CONCLUSION

I have considered the evidence in the record that is relevant to whether Mr. Casey 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. Casey.

Decision Date:
March 8, 2024



GAVIN NEWSOM
Governor, State of California