



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF TULARE

Tim Ward, *District Attorney*

PRESS RELEASE

4/25/19

VISALIA MURDERER STIPULATES TO 5 YEAR PAROLE HEARING DEFERRAL

On April 19, 2019, at High Desert State Prison in Susanville, Melvin Watters, age 45, stipulated to a five year California parole board hearing deferral for the 1994 murder of a man at a Visalia apartment complex.

Around 2:45 am on February 1, 1994, Watters went to the victim's apartment and knocked on the door. When the victim's mother answered the door, Watters asked to see her son, the victim's brother, stating that he needed to give him a message.

The victim, an adult male who was present in the room, looked at Watters and said, "It's Melvin, mom, it's okay." While talking to the victim in the doorway, Watters produced a handgun from his clothing and fired four shots, striking the victim in the chest, arm, and shoulder. Through investigation, it was discovered the victim had suffered a superficial stab wound earlier that evening and that Watters allegedly was directed by a relative of the assailant to silence the victim's brother who had witnessed the incident. Watters was promised an ounce of cocaine to carry out the crime. Watters had significant gang affiliations.

In late 1994, Watters was convicted and sentenced to 29 years-to-life for murder with the use of a firearm.

This was Watters' first parole hearing. The Office of the District Attorney regularly attends such hearings and a Senior Deputy District Attorney prepared to argue against the inmate's release at the hearing.

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