



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF TULARE

Tim Ward, *District Attorney*

PRESS RELEASE

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PAROLE DENIED IN PIXLEY ELDER MURDERS

This morning via remote video, TCDA prosecutors successfully argued against parole for Benigno Sanchez, age 45, for the vicious 1992 murders of an elderly couple in their home and the beating of another elderly man days later. Sanchez stipulated to a 5-year denial.

Late at night on Easter Sunday April 19, 1992, Sanchez, then 17-years-old, entered the Pixley residence of an 82-year-old male and his 81-year-old wife with the intention of burglarizing the home. When confronted by the male victim, Sanchez grabbed an unknown object and struck him several times on the head, killing him. Sanchez then did the same to the female victim, resulting in her death two days later. After beating the victims, Sanchez stole a purse and fled in the victims' vehicle.

Ten days later on April 29, Sanchez confronted a 72-year-old man outside of the man's Pixley home. Sanchez struck the man several times on the head, causing him to lose consciousness. Sanchez then stole the victim's wallet, entered his home, and stole a .22 caliber rifle. Through investigation and tips, Tulare County Sheriff's deputies arrested Sanchez on June 5, 1992.

In 1994, Sanchez was convicted of two counts of first-degree murder with the special circumstances that the crime was committed during burglary / robbery. He was also found guilty of robbery with the special allegation of use of a weapon and causing great bodily injury. Additionally, he was found guilty of three counts of residential burglary with the use of a weapon and causing great bodily injury, and auto theft.

Sanchez was sentenced to life in prison *without* the possibility of parole. In 2017, the Tulare County Superior Court, under the guidance of youthful offender sentencing factors decided by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Miller vs. Alabama*, affirmed that the LWOP sentence was appropriate based on the facts of the case. However, California Penal Code 3051(b)(4) (AB 965, 2019) gives parole eligibility to offenders who committed the crime before age 18, were sentenced to LWOP, and have served 25 years of their sentence.

“In 1994, the family of these victims stood in court and were told that the person who beat their loved ones to death in their own home would never get out of prison. If truth in sentencing was real, the only thing this family would have left to do is cherish the memories of those who were callously taken from them. Instead, they now have to endure the terrible details of that night’s events at parole hearing after parole hearing to plead their case that they should be afforded the justice that was promised to them in 1994,” said Tulare County District Attorney Tim Ward. “Once again, California shows us how it views victim’s rights. My office will never forget how violent crimes such as this affects families and our community as a whole. We will continue to fight for our community at these hearings.”

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