



COUNTY OF YOLO  
OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
JEFF W. REISIG, DISTRICT ATTORNEY

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Date:** April 12, 2011      **Contact:** Jonathan Raven, Chief Deputy District Attorney  
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**Governor Reverses Parole Board  
Woodland Child Murderer to Stay in Prison**

(Woodland, CA) – April 12, 2011- Yolo County District Attorney Jeff Reisig announced today that Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr. has reversed the Board of Parole Hearings decision to grant parole to 49-year-old murderer Christopher Fowler.

On November 1, 1983, Fowler killed 22-month-old Aaron Miller of Woodland. At the time of the murder, Fowler was watching Aaron for his girlfriend, the child's mother. Fowler became upset with Aaron when he would not stop crying while Fowler attempted to sleep. Fowler entered Aaron's room and struck him in the head, shook him, and threw him to the ground, all in front of his 3-year old sister. When the grandmother, a nurse, arrived, Fowler attempted to prevent her from taking Aaron to the hospital. Aaron died two days later as a result of his injuries.

A Yolo County Superior Court judge sentenced Fowler to 15 years to life in prison for the murder. On November 8, 2010, the Board of Parole Hearings found Fowler suitable for parole, and scheduled a tentative release date.

Members of the victim's family and Yolo County Chief Deputy District Attorney Jonathan Raven appeared at Fowler's Parole Hearing, arguing against Fowler's release. The Woodland Police Department and the Yolo County Sheriff's Office sent letters to the Governor requesting that he reverse the Parole Board's decision. This case has been under review by Governor Brown since the Parole Board's November decision.

Governor Brown issued his decision on April 7, 2011. In reversing the Parole Board, the Governor stated "The utter inhumanity of Mr. Fowler's crime coupled with his inability or unwillingness to understand, own, or achieve some credible level of insight tells me that there is a substantial risk of danger to the public were he to be released from prison."

Yolo County District Attorney Jeff Reisig praised Governor Brown's decision. "Clearly Governor Brown reviewed all the evidence and made the right call," said Reisig. "Our community cannot risk having a man who savagely killed a baby for no apparent reason living back among us."

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OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

April 7, 2011

Mr. Chris Fowler, C-96996  
**California State Prison, Solano**  
2-9-129L  
Post Office Box 4000  
Vacaville, California 95696

Dear Mr. Fowler:

Penal Code section 3041.2 authorizes the Governor to review parole decisions of the Board of Parole Hearings concerning persons sentenced to an indeterminate term upon conviction of murder.

After considering the same factors considered by the Board, the Governor has invoked his authority to reverse the Board's decision to grant parole in your case. The Governor's statement of the reasons for his decision is attached.

A copy of this letter and the attached statement of reasons for his decision are being provided to you via the warden by email, and the signed original of this letter and the attached statement of reasons for his decision are being sent by mail. Additionally, I am transmitting a copy of this letter and the attached statement of reasons for his decision to the Board.

Sincerely,

  
STEPHEN ACQUISTO  
Chief Deputy Legal Affairs Secretary

Attachment

cc: Board of Parole Hearings (w/attachment via email)

**INDETERMINATE SENTENCE PAROLE RELEASE REVIEW**  
(Penal Code Section 3041.2)

**CHRIS MICHAEL FOWLER, C-96996**

Second-degree murder

**AFFIRM:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**MODIFY:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**REVERSE:**

  **X**  

**STATEMENT OF FACTS**

In late 1983, Chris Fowler lived with his girlfriend, Tina Miller, and her two children, Aaron, who was 22 months old, and Christy, who was three years old. On November 1, 1983, Mr. Fowler put both children down for an afternoon nap and fell asleep. About 40 minutes later, Christy woke Mr. Fowler up and told him Aaron was crying. Mr. Fowler went into Aaron's bedroom and screamed at the child, "What is your problem?" He slapped Aaron with his open hand knocking Aaron off the bed. Aaron went limp and his eyes had rolled back into his head. Despite the fact that he had already seriously injured Aaron, Mr. Fowler picked Aaron up and threw him to the floor again, causing Aaron to hit his head on the floor. He then picked Aaron up and placed him in the tub. Mr. Fowler called Tina and told her that Aaron was having an asthmatic seizure. Tina called her mother, a nurse, who lived on the same property. Tina's mother and sister arrived to find Christy crying hysterically and Fowler administering CPR to Aaron. Tina's mother immediately took over giving CPR to Aaron. They then took Aaron to the hospital. Aaron died two days later. The cause of Aaron's death was craniocerebral trauma.

Fowler smoked marijuana the morning of the life crime. He began smoking marijuana at age 14 and smoked on daily basis beginning at the age of 18.

**GOVERNING LAW:**

The question I must answer is whether Mr. Fowler will pose a current danger to the public if released. In answering this question, I must examine the same record that was before the Board of Parole Hearings and adhere to the same legal standards. The circumstances of the crime can provide evidence of current dangerousness when the record also establishes that something in the inmate's pre- or post-incarceration history, or the inmate's current demeanor and mental state, indicate that the circumstances of the crime remain probative of current dangerousness. (*In re Lawrence* (2008) 44 Cal. 4<sup>th</sup> 1181, 1214.) In rare circumstances, the aggravated nature of the crime alone can provide a valid basis for denying parole even when there is strong evidence of rehabilitation and no other evidence of current dangerousness. (*Id.* at pp. 1211, 1214.)

**DECISION:**

I acknowledge Mr. Fowler has made efforts to improve himself while incarcerated. In 2010, he earned an Associate of Science Degree in Psychology from Ashworth College. He has received vocational education and has earned state certification in Plant Agriculturist and Forest Technician, a Pest Control License, and a Certificate of Educational Achievement in Radiologic Technology Program. Mr. Fowler has attended Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous meetings for several years. He has participated in several self-help programs including: On Day At A Time; It Works When You Work It; Victim/Offender Learning Together Program; Self-Reflection/Evaluation; Project Pride-Repent, Reach-out, Restore, and Rebuild phases; Friends Outside Creative Conflict Resolution; Beyond Anger; Parenting; Anger Management; Breaking Barriers; Violence Project-Non-Violence training; Basic and Advanced Alternatives to Violence Project; and the KATARGE0 "Going Home" program. Mr. Fowler has volunteered in the Pastoral Care Services for terminally ill patients. He has been a group leader in the Arts in Corrections music program. He has participated in the Protestant Chapel Congregation and was commended for his work as team leader in the Christ-centered ministry Celebrate Recovery. Finally, he has held several institutional jobs. I commend Mr. Fowler for taking these positive steps. But they are outweighed by negative factors that demonstrate he remains unsuitable for parole.

Mr. Fowler's crime was appalling and senseless. When asked to tend to baby Aaron who was crying, Mr. Fowler responded by berating the child, then hitting him so hard he fell to the floor and went limp. Even after seeing that he had seriously injured Aaron, Mr. Fowler kept attacking the baby. He picked the limp baby up then threw him to the floor again, causing Aaron to hit his head. The brutality of Mr. Fowler's assault caused baby Aaron to go into a seizure. He died two days later from trauma to his skull and brain. Mr. Fowler chose to unleash his rage on the most vulnerable and helpless of victims. Baby Aaron could not run from the attack. Nor could he defend himself in any way. And Mr. Fowler attacked baby Aaron for inexplicable reasons.

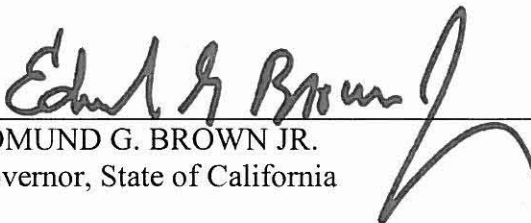
When I look at this killing, I find that Mr. Fowler has offered no credible explanation. He says that he was experiencing stress and anger in his relationship with Aaron's mother, and difficulty in sleeping. So what. Any parent or person who cares for a baby encounters sleep difficulties as a matter of course. And relationship-related stress and anger do not explain and certainly do not justify Mr. Fowler's violation and killing of this defenseless child. The utter inhumanity of Mr. Fowler's crime coupled with his inability or unwillingness to understand, own, or achieve some credible level of insight tells me that there is substantial risk of danger to the public were he to be released from prison.

Finally, in closing I note that several members of Aaron Miller's family, as well as the Yolo County District Attorney's Office, the Yolo County Sheriff, and the Woodland Police Chief share my concern that Mr. Fowler remains dangerous, and oppose his parole.

**CONCLUSION:**

I have considered the evidence in the record that is relevant to whether Mr. Fowler is currently dangerous. When considered as a whole, I find the evidence I have discussed shows why he currently poses a danger to society if released from prison. Therefore, I reverse the decision to parole Mr. Fowler.

Decision Date: April 7, 2011

  
EDMUND G. BROWN JR.  
Governor, State of California