



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

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Contact:** Jonathan Raven, Chief Deputy District Attorney  
Jonathan.raven@yolocounty.org  
Bilingual Spanish Representative available  
@ (530)666-8356

**Two Yolo County Murderers Denied Parole  
at Two Separate CA Prisons**

(Woodland, CA) –June 6, 2019 – This week the Board of Parole Hearings denied parole for two Yolo County murderers at separate State Prisons across California.

On June 4, 2019, Thomas Branscum, who is 57-years-old and was living in Woodland at the time of the murder, attended his hearing at the Mule Creek State Prison in Ione, CA. On November 27, 1990, Yolo County Sheriff’s deputies found the body of 30-year-old Lewis Scholes in a secluded wooded area near Portuguese Bend, one mile east of Knights Landing on the Sacramento River. Fourteen months later, Branscum pled guilty to murdering Lewis Scholes and was sentenced to 15-years-to-life in state prison.

Asst. Chief Deputy District Attorney Melinda Aiello appeared at the hearing on behalf of the Yolo County District’s Attorney’s Office. Commissioner Michelle Minor and Deputy Commissioner Andrea Miles agreed to deny Branscum parole for a period of three years after their deliberations following the hearing. In denying parole, the commissioners relied on the Comprehensive Risk Assessment finding that the Mr. Branscum “did not seem to fully grasp the connections between his substance use and his mental health, and how they may have interacted and influenced his behavior in the community.”

On June 5, 2019, Eric Hudson, who is 43-years-old and was also living in Woodland at the time of the murder, attended his Board of Parole lifer hearing at the Valley State Prison in Chowchilla, CA. On July 14, 2005, Eric Hudson went to the home of his mother-in-law to relay a message to her and to obtain some property that belonged to his wife. His mother-in-law, Yvonne Powell, was asleep on the couch upon his arrival. She opened the door and allowed him in. The two began to argue and Mr. Hudson beat her multiple times over the head with an asp which he had brought into the house from his car. An asp is a retractable baton commonly used by law enforcement. At the hearing, Mr. Hudson told commissioners that he struck her at least 11 times and left her there on the floor where she later died from her injuries. Mr. Hudson went to great measures to conceal his crime by hiding evidence in multiple locations. On March 24, 2009, a Yolo County jury found Mr. Hudson guilty of second degree murder, with an enhancement for use of a deadly weapon, and first degree burglary for entering the home with the asp with the intent to assault Ms. Powell. Chief Deputy District Attorney Jonathan Raven attended the hearing on behalf

of the Yolo County District Attorney's office. Raven argued that Mr. Hudson still lacked insight and to this day "claims that it was Ms. Powell who had the asp and that he took it out of her hands, which is contrary to the jury's verdict that he entered the home with the asp with the intent to assault her." After the four hour hearing, Commissioners Diane Dobbs and Mary Thornton found Mr. Hudson unsuitable for parole stating that he still posed an unreasonable risk to public safety. Commissioner Dobbs stated that "Mr. Hudson has not yet fully explored several contributing factors to his conduct in this crime and that he is just beginning to scratch the surface of many of these issues."

District Attorney Jeff Reisig spoke of the critical role of the District Attorney at parole hearings. "We are the voice of the victims and the citizens of Yolo County," said Reisig.

Branscum and Hudson will not be eligible for parole until June, 2022.

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