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Davis Killer Granted Parole

Timothy Wilson killed John O’Friel thinking he was gay

(Woodland, CA) –September 20, 2019 – On September 19, 2019, a Board of Parole Hearings panel granted parole to convicted murderer Timothy Wilson. At the hearing, which took place at California State Prison, Solano, Commissioner Michael Ruff and Deputy Commissioner Daniel Blake unanimously agreed that Wilson no longer was a public safety risk and was ready to be released to the community.

A Yolo County Jury convicted Wilson of Second Degree Murder in 1994 and Wilson was sentenced to 20 years-to-life in state prison. Wilson, then age 23, savagely beat to death 46-year-old John O’Friel, a Bay area software salesman, at a Davis park on July 8, 1993. After the murder, O’Friel was so unrecognizable, due to the beating, that his funeral was closed casket. Wilson has claimed that he beat O’Friel because O’Friel made sexual advances towards him. After the murder, Wilson dumped O’Friel’s body in a rural part of Yolo County and took the O’Friel’s car and personal property to the San Francisco area where Wilson lived. Wilson was not arrested until almost a month later. The jury convicted Wilson’s 17-year-old accomplice, Josh Coleman, of involuntary manslaughter.

This was Wilson’s third parole hearing. At each hearing, and in interviews with psychologists who prepared Comprehensive Risk Assessments, Wilson has claimed that he was physically and sexually abused as a child. He has claimed that as a result of this childhood trauma, he was

triggered by O’Friel trying to touch him so he “drew a line in the sand” and decided to teach O’Friel a lesson. The California Department of Corrections psychologist who conducted the current Comprehensive Risk Assessment in May 2019, rated Wilson a “low risk” for future violence but stated on five occasions in her 18-page report that Wilson would benefit from future counseling and treatment associated with his early trauma history. In prior reports, psychologists have stated that Wilson was dishonest, lacked credibility, had an anti-social personality disorder, was narcissistic, and had psychopathic features.

Chief Deputy District Attorney Jonathan Raven appeared at the hearing on behalf of the Yolo County District’s Attorney’s Office. Raven argued against Wilson’s release stating “If Mr. Wilson’s trauma is his excuse for the murder, then clearly he should resolve this trauma before being allowed back out. He has made progress but has more work to do.”

Commissioner Ruff read the panel’s decision stating that Mr. Wilson was now suitable for parole due to the “low risk” rating by the psychologist, the fact that he was under 26 making him a “youthful offender,” as well as other factors discussed during the hearing. Ruff said that after listening to Wilson that “*some* of his remorse was genuine” and it’s not necessary for the panel to find that Wilson’s remorse was fully genuine.

The widow of the victim, Carol O’Friel, and three of their seven children attended the hearing. After the hearing, she expressed her disappointment. “Of course we are disappointed by today’s verdict. Wilson admitted he is a master manipulator. He has now admitted he faked mental illness during his first seven years in prison, then, for the next seven years, he faked needing a wheelchair. When he would explain about his long history of assaults and many restraining orders against him, he would say how the victims triggered his rage. I still don’t hear culpability. I just hear excuses. He has more work to do on his trigger issues.”

This decision will go to the Board of Parole Hearings for approval and then Governor Gavin Newsom will determine whether or not to reverse the panel’s decision. Ms. O’Friel stated that she and her family will be making a strong case to the Governor for him to reverse the panel’s decision. “I don’t want another family losing a loved one at Wilson’s hands and then coming to me and asking me why we didn’t fight harder to keep Wilson in prison,” said O’Friel.

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