



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

301 SECOND STREET - WOODLAND, CALIFORNIA 95695 - 530.666.8180 - FAX 530.666.8185

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: September 2, 2022 **Contact:** Melinda Aiello, Asst. Chief Deputy DA
Melinda.aiello@yolocounty.org
Bilingual Spanish Representative available
@ (530)666-8356

**West Sacramento Man Convicted of 1995 Murder Denied Resentencing
Michael Todd tortured and beat James Williams over a drug deal**

(Woodland, CA) – September 2, 2022 – On August 26, 2022, Yolo County Superior Court Judge Steven Mock denied a petition for resentencing for Michael Todd, that would have reversed his 1996 murder conviction. Todd, now 56, lived in Sacramento at the time of the murder and is currently serving his prison sentence in the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

In March of 1995, Kenneth Buffer and Michael Todd brutally attacked the victim, James Williams, at a home in West Sacramento. During the trial, witnesses testified that Williams owed Buffer and Todd \$10,000, as the result of drug deal. Buffer severely beat Williams with his hands and feet until Williams went into a coma. While Buffer watched, Todd burned Williams multiples times with a knife that had been heated on a stove. Also, caustic liquid was poured over Williams' body which caused severe burns. Buffer later drove Williams, who was nearly dead, to his friend's house where he was abandoned in the back seat of his own car. Williams died ten days later of "blunt force trauma," after being taken to the hospital. A jury convicted both Buffer and Todd of 1st degree murder and torture, and both were sentenced to 25-years-to-life in prison.

On January 1, 2019, changes were made to the felony murder law eliminating prosecution of an individual who agrees to commit a felony crime that results in a murder if that individual did not harbor actual malice or was not a major participant who acted with reckless disregard during specified felony offenses.

Todd argued that he did not participate in any physical beating of the victim and denied burning the victim. He claimed his actions did not contribute to the victim's death and, as such, he did not act with malice.

Judge Mock found that while the victim's main cause of death was blunt force trauma, the death resulted from a constellation of injuries. The Court determined beyond

a reasonable doubt that Todd's repeated burning of the victim with a hot knife contributed to the victim's death and supported a finding of implied malice murder. The Court denied Todd's petition for resentencing. Todd is scheduled for a parole suitability hearing on March 24, 2023.

District Attorney Jeff Reisig stated "we are very thankful Judge Mock found that the evidence satisfied the burden of proof. We believe strongly that Michael Todd is still a murderer even after the changes in the law."

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