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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Date:** May 1, 2026      **Contact:** Melinda Aiello, Chief Deputy DA  
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**Sacramento Man Granted Parole for 1995 Murder**

**(Woodland, CA) – May 1, 2026** – On April 29, 2026, Board of Parole Hearings commissioners granted parole to Michael Todd. Todd, now 60, is currently serving his life-sentence at Salinas Valley State Prison.

On March 29, 1995, Todd and Kenneth Buffer brutally attacked James Williams at a home in West Sacramento. During the trial, witnesses testified that Williams owed Buffer and Todd \$10,000, as a result of drug deal. Buffer severely beat Williams. While Buffer watched, Todd burned Williams multiples times with a knife that had been heated on a stove. 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 after being taken to the hospital. In 1996, a Yolo County jury convicted both Buffer and Todd of 1<sup>st</sup> degree murder and torture, and both were sentenced to 25-years-to-life in prison.

Todd had been denied parole at three prior hearings where the District Attorney's Office opposed his release. Buffer was granted parole and later released from prison in 2021. During the April 29 parole hearing, Todd took full responsibility for the death of Williams and in response to questions

from Commissioner Robert Barton discussed his rehabilitative efforts. In granting parole, Commissioner Barton stated, “We find you no longer pose an unreasonable risk to public safety. We find you suitable. We will impose special conditions on you, and we will order additional programming upon your release.” Williams’ son attended the parole hearing and was the final person to speak. He expressed apprehension due to statements made by Todd but commended the commissioners for conducting a thorough hearing and stated that he trusted that they would make the right decision. Jonathan Raven, who represented the District Attorney’s office, also raised concerns based on statements made by Todd and the 15-page Comprehensive Risk Assessment completed by a psychologist on behalf of CDCR. Ultimately neither the victim’s son nor the District Attorney’s office expressly opposed a grant of parole.

Yolo County District Attorney Jeff Reisig stated that with individuals sentenced to life with the possibility of parole, the law is very clear that they cannot be denied parole based solely on the egregious nature of the crime. Otherwise, there would be no possibility of parole. “We hope that Mr. Todd will be a productive member of society and that he has intensive supervision by state parole,” stated Reisig. “Clearly a decision to grant parole to someone convicted of murder is concerning and comes with risk. I find comfort knowing that Mr. Williams’ son was at peace with this decision.”

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