



Office of the District Attorney Stanislaus County

Birgit Fladager
District Attorney

Assistant District Attorney
Dave Harris

Chief Deputies
Doug Raynaud
Annette Rees
Marlisa Ferreira

Bureau of Investigation
Lt. David Hutchinson
Lt. Froilan Mariscal

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: June 5, 2017
Re: Kheth Khun
Parole Granted

For More Information Contact:

John Goold, Public Information Liaison
Phone: (209) 525-6909

Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Kheth Khun, age 45, of Modesto, was found suitable for parole at a June 1, 2017 hearing of the State Board of Parole Hearings at Deuel Vocational Institution in Tracy, CA.

Khun was a student at Modesto High School and a member of a Cambodian gang. Also at the school was a group of about 40 students who called themselves "The Cowboys", who wore Western style clothing, listened to country music, and drove pick-up trucks. The friction between the two groups was high because a gang associate of Khun's was angered when a "Cowboy" made a rude remark and gesture to him the previous day. Khun then told some "Cowboys" to meet at the Pizza Pub after the high school football game. The next day, on Friday, November 9, 1990, Khun walked from a pool hall to the pizza parlor with a handgun. Khun started firing in the parking lot hitting a 17-year-old student in her shoulder, a 15-year-old student in the left side of his head, and another bystander who was parking his pick-up truck. None of these victims was a "Cowboy" or had anything to do with the previous conflict with the Cambodian gang. Khun fled the area and threw his gun into a river. He was apprehended the next day.

Khun was convicted after a jury trial of three counts of attempted murder, use of a firearm, and causing great bodily injury.

In 2010, Khun was denied parole for 10 years. However, under a new law Khun is now eligible for early release as a "youthful offender" since he was under age 23 at the time of the shooting. While Khun has been in custody, he completed his AA degree, remained discipline free, and was assessed by the prison psychologist as being a "low risk for future violence." Although the District Attorney's Office opposed early parole due to the egregious and callous disregard for life and suffering of others, the Board granted parole. Khun has an immigration hold from Cambodia and may be deported upon his release.

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