



# Office of the District Attorney Stanislaus County

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **For Immediate Release**

Date: April 9, 2021  
Re: Salesh Prasad  
Murderer Granted Parole

### **For More Information Contact:**

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Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Salesh Prasad of Modesto, California was found suitable for parole at an April 8, 2021 hearing of the State Board of Parole Hearings at the Correctional Training Facility in Soledad, California. Deputy District Attorney Kirk Brennan appeared at the hearing on behalf of the People for Stanislaus County.

On June 4, 1994, Prasad shot Thomas Ortiz twice in the back of the head over disputes they had been having. On April 13, 1995, a Stanislaus County jury convicted Prasad of the second degree murder of Thomas Ortiz with the personal use of a firearm. On June 15, 1995, Judge VanderWall sentenced Prasad to 20 years to life with the possibility of parole.

During his incarceration, Prasad committed nine serious rule violations, but his last one was in 2009. A comprehensive risk assessment by a prison psychologist opined that Prasad represents a low risk for future violence.

Prosecutor Brennan argued against Prasad's release based on various unsuitability factors, including his lack of credibility in answers to commissioners' questions, his prior serious rule violations in prison and his inadequate parole plans.

After deliberations, the Board found Prasad no longer poses an unreasonable risk to public safety and is suitable for parole. The Board noted the prison psychologist's evaluation that Prasad poses a low risk of future violence, had no serious rule violations for more than 11 years, and had taken self-improvement programming in prison, including AA/NA, anger management, and individual psychotherapy. This was Prasad's sixth parole hearing. He was previously denied parole for three years after a May 29, 2019 hearing. Prasad has been in prison for 25 years.

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