



Office of the District Attorney Stanislaus County

Birgit Fladager
District Attorney

Assistant District Attorney
Jeffrey M. Laugero

Chief Deputies
Marlisa Ferreira
Wendell Emerson
Michael D. Houston
Mark Zahner

Bureau of Investigation
Chief Terry L. Seese

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: August 2, 2022
Re: Douglas L. Thiessen
Parole Denied

For More Information Contact:

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

Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Douglas L. Thiessen, age 65, of Newman was found unsuitable for parole during a July 1, 2022 hearing of the State Board of Parole Hearings held at San Quentin State Prison. Deputy District Attorney Margot L. Roen appeared at the hearing on behalf of the People.

On June 7, 2001, Thiessen's 76-year-old mother told police that her son Douglas had tried to strangle her with a belt after she told him his woman friend could no longer stay at their home. Thiessen became angry, pushed the victim, then pulled off his belt and put it around the victim's neck, twisting it so tightly that it cut off her air supply. At one point during the attack, Thiessen threatened his mother, stating "I'm going to kill you. I could kill you like I did Bill [his brother] and have no regrets." Thiessen fled the scene before the police arrived.

Prior to this crime, in 1981 Thiessen had shot and killed his own brother, Bill, in self-defense. Then, in 1995, Thiessen beat his sister with a chair and was convicted of felony battery causing serious bodily injury.

On October 3, 2001, Thiessen was arrested during a traffic stop for an outstanding warrant. At the time, Thiessen was wearing the same belt and buckle as described by the victim. During an interview, he denied to police that he ever tried to strangle and kill his mother even though his sister and a brother had both reported seeing bruises on the victim's neck several days after the incident.

On October 8, 2002, a Stanislaus County Superior Court jury found Thiessen guilty of attempted murder, assault with a deadly weapon, threatening to kill or cause great bodily injury to the victim and elder abuse. The jury also found true an enhancement for use of a dangerous or deadly weapon. On November 14, 2002, Thiessen was sentenced to serve eight years to life in state prison.

A 2021 evaluation by a prison psychologist gave the opinion that Thiessen still represented a moderate risk of violence if released into the community. The doctor noted that Thiessen had only recently began to participate in self-help/treatment activities.

Office: 832 12th Street, Suite 300 Modesto, CA 95354 Mailing: PO BOX 442 Modesto, CA 95353
Telephone: (209) 525-5550 Fax: (209) 558-4027 www.stanislaus-da.org



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During the parole hearing on July 1, 2022, Thiessen testified under oath before the Board and denied ever committing any crimes against his mother.

Following deliberations, the Board denied Thiessen's release on parole for a period of three years, finding he still poses an unreasonable risk of danger to society if released. In support of their decision, the Board cited factors including Thiessen's lack of remorse for his crimes, lack of insight into his violent behavior particularly with regard to domestic violence, lack of sufficient programming, including lack of participation in alcohol abuse treatment, and his failure to put forth any tangible post release parole plans.

This was Thiessen's fifth parole hearing. Thiessen was previously denied parole in June of 2008, June of 2010, May of 2013, and May of 2018. His next parole consideration will be scheduled in three years.

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