



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF KERN

CIVIC CENTER JUSTICE BUILDING
1215 TRUXTUN AVENUE
BAKERSFIELD, CALIFORNIA 93301
(661) 868-2340, FAX: (661) 868-2700

ANDREA S. KOHLER
ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY

CYNTHIA J. ZIMMER
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

JOSEPH A. KINZEL
ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY

May 31, 2024
MEDIA ADVISORY

CONTACT:

DDA Gina Nargie
(661) 868-2340
DDA David McKillop
(661) 868-2330

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Approved by: CJZ
Press Release #24-76

Parole Denied to Convicted Murderer and Attempted Murderer John Gibson
CDC #V66493; Kern County Court Case #BF104549A

District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced the California Board of Parole Hearings (BPH) denied release to convicted murderer and attempted murder John Gibson. On May 23, 2024, BPH found that Gibson continues to pose a current and unreasonable risk to public safety. Representing the District Attorney's Office was Deputy District Attorney Gina Nargie.

Gibson lived in a trailer located on victim Kay Horton's property in Taft, California. A second male victim was staying at Ms. Horton's residence at the time of the crime. During November of 2003, Gibson and Ms. Horton repeatedly argued. He believed Ms. Horton was stealing from him. Gibson told a witness that Ms. Horton was trying to poison him and, despite having no injuries, that Ms. Horton had someone beat him with a pipe while sleeping.

During the evening of November 30th and the early morning hours of December 1st of 2003, Gibson entered Ms. Horton's residence armed with a metal pipe while the victims were asleep. A female witness was the first to wake up, hearing broken glass as the male victim cried out in pain. Gibson beat the male victim until he was knocked out by a blow to the head and stabbed him in the throat. Ms. Horton was then heard telling Gibson not to do it, followed by a cracking sound and repeat punching. The witness was eventually able to dial 9-1-1.

Law enforcement arrived within minutes. Gibson admitted to beating both victims with a metal rod and believed he had killed them. Ms. Horton suffered extensive bruising and died as a result of blunt force trauma to her head. The male victim required surgery to repair the stab wound in his neck. Additionally, the victim's arms were broken so badly that he needed surgery to have plates and screws placed in his arms.

At trial, Gibson pled not guilty by reason of insanity. On June 15, 2004, a Kern County Jury found Gibson guilty of murder in the first degree. The jury found true the special allegation that Gibson personally used a deadly weapon to commit the murder of Kay Horton. Next, the jury found Gibson guilty of the

attempted murder of the male victim. The jury found true the special allegations that Gibson personally inflicted great bodily injury and used a deadly weapon to commit the attempted murder.

After the jury found Gibson guilty, the same jury sat through the second phase of the criminal trial, known as the sanity phase, to determine whether or not Gibson was legally sane or insane at the time of the murder and attempted murder. On June 21, 2004, the jury was unable to reach a unanimous verdict on the issue of sanity and was excused.

On October 28, 2004, a new jury was assembled for the retrial of the sanity phase. On November 10, 2004, the jury unanimously found Gibson legally sane at the time he committed his crimes.

On January 21, 2005, a Kern County Judge sentenced Gibson to 25-years-to-life, 7-years-to-life, plus an additional five years.

On May 23, 2024, the BPH conducted Gibson's initial parole hearing. At the time of the hearing, Gibson still had approximately 9 years left to serve in prison before his minimum eligible parole date. Gibson, age 66, is being considered for early release pursuant to Elder Parole Laws. In California, incarcerated persons are eligible for the Elderly Parole Program after reaching age 50 and being continuously incarcerated for 20 years.

At his parole hearing, the Commissioners focused on Gibson's understanding of how his mental health and substance abuse issues factored into the crimes he committed. Next, Gibson's Commissioner addressed his plans for managing his mental health and sobriety in the community. The Kern County District Attorney's Office asked the BPH to deny parole. The BPH has the option of denying an inmate parole for a period of 15, 10, 7, 5 or 3 years. Gibson's commissioners issued a three-year denial. As such, Gibson's next parole hearing date could potentially be in 18 months.

District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer commented; "This office has gone to great lengths to ensure that this remorseless murderer pays the price for the damage he has caused. This time is no different as we continue to advocate for victims and represent the people of Kern County."