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Parole Denied for Convicted Gang Member Who Shot Deputy
CDC #F87553; Kern County Court Case number DF015473B

Kern County District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced that the California Board of Parole Hearings (BPH) denied release to convicted Gang Member Erik De Santiago, age 38. On July 30, 2024, BPH found that De Santiago continues to pose a current and unreasonable risk to public safety. Representing the District Attorney's Office was Deputy District Attorney Peter Zerbib.

In the early morning hours of September 23, 2005, a Los Angeles County Deputy and his partner were questioning a suspect. De Santiago, a "Sentinel Boys" street gang member, had concealed himself behind a vehicle with an assault weapon. When the Deputy searched the area, De Santiago emerged from hiding and began shooting at the Deputy, striking him in the right shoulder. De Santiago fled the scene. He was later captured after a 9-and-a-half-hour search.

On June 18, 2007, De Santiago pled no contest to Assault with a Firearm on a peace officer, gang charges, and other related charges. De Santiago was sentenced to a term of 34 years in state prison.

While in prison, De Santiago continued to associate with gang members and had numerous prison violations including possession of narcotics, possession of alcohol, and assault on inmates. In 2019, while an inmate at Kern Valley State Prison in Delano, De Santiago got in a fight with another gang member. On December 8, 2020, he was convicted of possession of a weapon by an inmate and was sentenced to an additional 5 years and 4 months in prison.

On July 30, 2024, De Santiago had his parole hearing. The Board of Parole Hearings noted De Santiago had not remained discipline free in prison and maintained negative peer interactions. De Santiago failed to address a history of problems with substance abuse. De Santiago also continued association with Gangs while in prison. The Kern County District Attorney's Office asked the Board of Parole to deny parole. The Board of Parole found that De Santiago was not suitable for parole and posed a current unreasonable risk of danger to society. The Board of Parole has the option of denying an inmate parole for a period of 15, 10, 7, 5 or 3 years. De Santiago's commissioners issued a five-year denial.

District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer commented; "De Santiago has displayed violent behavior in and out of prison, making reintegration into society unsuitable."