



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

CYNTHIA J. ZIMMER
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

JOSEPH A. KINZEL
ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY

KENNETH M. RUSSELL
ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY

April 30, 2025
MEDIA ADVISORY

CONTACT:

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Approved by: CJZ
Press Release #25-44

Board of Parole Grants Release to Dangerous Gang Member over the District Attorney's Objection
CDC #T00303; Kern County Court Case #SC080105A

Kern District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced that the California Board of Parole Hearings (BPH) granted release to gang member Ricky Black. On April 2, 2025, BPH found that Black no longer continues to pose a current and unreasonable risk to public safety. Representing the District Attorney's Office and opposing the release was Deputy District Attorney Gina Nargie.

Black was a member of the Nazi Low Rider (NLR) Gang. On September 23, 1999, Black attended a gang meeting and gave the order to have the victim, T.J. Taylor, stabbed. The victim was fatally stabbed at a park by a member of the NLR gang. On January 20, 2000, in a separate gang incident, Black held a meat cleaver to a second victim's throat and threatened to kill the victim and the victim's relatives. Black told this second victim he was "a shot caller" for the NLR.

On September 28, 2000, a Kern County Jury found Black guilty of conspiracy to commit murder, conspiracy to commit an assault with a deadly weapon and assault with a deadly weapon for both the 1999 and 2000 crimes. The court also found that Black suffered two prior "strike convictions" for residential burglary and attempted robbery. In addition, the court found true that Black had served two prior prison terms. On October 27, 2000, a Kern County Judge sentenced Black to 75 years to life plus an additional 11 years.

In 2002, the Fifth District Court of Appeals found that although there was sufficient evidence for Black's conviction for conspiracy to commit murder, the appellate court found that the jury was improperly instructed. As a result, the charge was dismissed, and Black was resentenced to 50 years to life plus 11 additional years. His conviction for conspiracy to commit an assault with a deadly weapon and assault with a deadly weapon remained.

On April 10, 2019, Black was resentenced yet again due to changes to the law related to eliminating sentencing enhancements for repeat offenders, reducing his sentence to 50 years to life.

According to current records from the California Department of Rehabilitation, Black is not eligible for parole until November 2038. However, due to legal changes under Proposition 57, his underlying offense—assault with a deadly weapon is considered a nonviolent offense. Under Proposition 57, an offender of a nonviolent offense is eligible for parole once the upper term of the sentencing range is fulfilled for the underlying offense, ignoring any other charges or enhancements. As a result, Black became eligible for parole. Prior to the reclassification and resentencing, his earliest parole eligibility date was November 2051.

Although classified as a non-violent offender, Black was twice convicted while in state prison in Kings County - once in 2003 for possessing a sharp instrument, resulting in an 8-year sentence, and again in 2012 for assault with a deadly weapon, leading to an additional 2 years and 8 months in prison.

Black has had a total of four parole hearings. At each hearing, the District Attorney's Office appeared and opposed release.

First Parole Hearing (October 28, 2020): At the time of that hearing, the panel noted that he had “a minimum eligible parole date of November 3, 2051”. Ultimately, BPH issued a five-year denial.

Second Parole Hearing (February 16, 2023): Despite the five-year denial of parole, the prison administrative review process allowed Black to have his second parole hearing. BPH denied parole and issued a three-year denial.

Third Parole Hearing (September 19, 2024): Again, Black was given an opportunity to have his parole hearing early. Black was granted parole with commissioners noting that his resentencing carried weight with the panel because he was now a non-violent offender.

Parole Reversal (November 25, 2024): The En Banc Panel of the BPH reversed Black's grant of parole due to a recording error and set his case for rehearing.

Parole Rehearing (April 2, 2025): At the time of this hearing, Black had served approximately 25 years in prison. The commissioners focused on his insight into his crime, criminal history, mental health, substance abuse history, institutional behavior, gang activity, and rehabilitative programming. Again, the Kern County District Attorney's Office asked the BPH to deny parole. The BPH found that Black was suitable for parole and no longer posed a current unreasonable risk of danger to society. The Board commented that Black's grant of parole is “an intended consequence of the law.”

District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer commented on the release saying; “An individual with a clear and dangerous history of gang involvement has been granted parole under lenient laws that fail to prioritize public safety. Despite the severity of his actions, Black is not classified as a violent offender and became eligible for parole prematurely - an outcome that blatantly disregards the jury's verdict, the judge's sentence, and the well-being of our community.”

Ricky Black:

