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Board of Parole Hearings Granted Parole for Convicted Credit Union Robber
CDCR #H09559; Court Case #SC0814401B/BF093035B

Kern County District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced that the California Board of Parole Hearings (BPH) granted release to convicted felon Michael Keith Williams, age 55. On September 3, 2025, BPH found that Williams no longer poses an unreasonable risk to public safety. Representing the District Attorney's Office was Deputy District Attorney Matt Rexroad.

On September 25, 2000, Williams, who was on parole, and one of his companions entered the Safe One Credit Union in Bakersfield. After a note was passed to the teller stating, "Give me your money," Williams jumped over the counter, pointed a gun at the teller and said, "Open all your drawers or I'll shoot you". Williams and his two accomplices fled with \$10,724 in stolen cash.

The Bakersfield Police Department pursued the getaway vehicle which quickly turned into a high-speed chase toward Lamont. Williams, who was driving the car, at one point hit a top speed of 110 miles per hour. During the pursuit, cash was thrown out the windows of the fleeing vehicle. Williams showed no regard for the life of the Safe One Credit Union teller nor the children on bicycles or walking along the route where his pursuit occurred.

On December 27, 2000, Williams was convicted of Second-Degree Robbery, marking his third strike offense. On January 25, 2021, a Kern County Superior Court Judge sentenced Williams to an elevated sentence of 25 years to life in prison. While in prison he was convicted of Possession of a Weapon by a Prisoner which added four years to his prison sentence.

The Kern County District Attorney's Office asked the Board of Parole to deny parole. After a two-hour hearing, the Board of Parole found that Williams was suitable for parole, discounting evidence that Williams was openly deceitful in his risk assessment interview and had a hard time following the rules while in prison as he had recent violations for possession of cellular phones among other violations including his participating in violent behavior and drug use.

District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer commented; “Our office expressed serious concerns about the release of a three-strike offender with multiple prison violations. Public safety remains our top priority. While our concerns were not heard today, we remain committed to representing the interests of the community and advocating for crime victims.”