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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Re: Parole Denial For Convicted Murderer Eddie Knight: Kern County Superior Court case BF102127A

Kern County District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced a parole hearing outcome in a significant murder case.

On January 14, 2022, the Board of Parole Hearings denied parole for convicted murderer Eddie Knight. In 2003, Knight, who was 50 years old at the time and already had an extensive criminal history of violence in numerous States, was convicted by a Kern County jury of second-degree murder and assault with a deadly weapon for the murder of his estranged wife and assault with a knife upon his eleven-year-old stepdaughter. Knight was sentenced to 20-years-to-life after the 2003 trial.

On April 4, 2003, Knight came to the home of his estranged wife, Cheryl Rucker (39 years old) in the city of Taft and began yelling and fighting with her. Several children were present at Cheryl's home at the time, including Knight and Cheryl's shared 9-year-old son, and Cheryl's 11-year-old and 13-year-old daughters. Eventually, Knight pushed Cheryl to the ground and stabbed her repeatedly while on top of her. Cheryl was stabbed numerous times in her neck and chest, penetrating her heart and lungs, killing her. The 9-year-old son cried and attempted to intervene as he saw his father stab his mother to death. Knight also stabbed Cheryl's 11-year-old daughter in the back after she tried to stop Knight from killing her mother. After stabbing Cheryl and her daughter, Knight approached Cheryl's 13-year-old daughter with a knife in his hand and said, "you're next."

Kern County Sheriff's deputies arrived at the scene at around 4pm on April 3, 2003. They found Knight in front of the residence in possession of a knife along with he and Cheryl's 9-year-old son. Cheryl's daughters led deputies to Cheryl's body, which was lying in a large pool of blood in the hallway. While searching the home, deputies found a note from Cheryl indicating that she needed to get a restraining order against Knight because he was threatening her life and the lives of her children.

In the weeks leading up to the murder, Knight told multiple witnesses that he was going to kill his wife, and specifically told at least two different people that he planned on cutting her head off. One witness told investigators that Cheryl was so fearful of her husband that she gave him \$10,000 to keep him from carrying out her threats.

At the parole hearing, two of Cheryl's daughters shared with the Parole Board how the crime impacted them. One daughter, who was 19 years old at the time of her mother's murder, described how she was left to try to help raise her younger siblings after Knight killed her mother.

The then-13-year-old daughter also spoke before the Board of the trauma that she has experienced over the past nineteen years, waiting for Knight to follow through with his threat to kill her, and reliving the day that she saw her mother stabbed to death and witnessed her younger sister being stabbed.

For his part, at the hearing Knight continued to minimize his role in the murder. He claimed he did not actually stab his stepdaughter and claimed that he was talking to a dog and not the 13-year-old when he said, "you're next." Knight further claimed that he believed that he was defending his son when he killed his wife and made a vague assertion that his diabetes may have caused him to hallucinate. Knight's claims were rejected by the parole panel, just as they were rejected by a Kern County jury in 2003. Knight was denied parole for a period of three years.

DDA Michael Caves represented the Kern County District Attorney's Office at the parole hearing.

District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer commented on the denial: "Effectively representing victims of violent crime goes beyond the criminal trial and even sentencing. Preventing the early release of violent criminals and ensuring that survivors' voices are heard are both values that lie at the core of the mission of the District Attorney's Office."

Eddie Knight:



Cheryl Rucker:

