



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF TULARE

Tim Ward, *District Attorney*

PRESS RELEASE

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VISALIA MAN DENIED PAROLE FOR 1976 MURDER

On September 20, 2018, at the California Medical Facility in Vacaville, a California parole board denied parole for Richard Esquivel, age 64, of Visalia, for the 1976 murder of a man that took place during the course of a robbery. Esquivel received a 5 year denial and is not scheduled for another hearing until 2023.

At about 9:20 pm on August 8, 1976, with a bandana covering his face, Esquivel forced his way in to a small two-bedroom house occupied by a young family near the Lincoln Oval Park in Visalia. Esquivel exhibited a handgun and demanded money. The victim, Jose Vaca, was in bed. Mr. Vaca gave Esquivel his pants which contained only 15 cents. During this time a neighbor saw Esquivel and called police. A second neighbor grabbed his rifle and approached the victim's residence. The defendant incorrectly believed the neighbor with the rifle was law enforcement. Esquivel threatened to shoot Mr. Vaca and used him as a human shield. Gunfire was exchanged and Mr. Vaca was accidentally shot in the chest resulting in his death. Esquivel fled the scene; however, he was later identified and arrested.

Esquivel was found guilty of first-degree murder, kidnapping during a robbery, robbery, conspiracy to commit robbery, and first-degree burglary. He was sentenced to life in prison in 1977.

This was Esquivel's third parole denial. The District Attorney's Office routinely attends parole hearings and a Senior Deputy District Attorney argued against the inmate's release in this case.

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