



COUNTY OF FRESNO

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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PAROLE BOARD GRANTS PAROLE TO MURDERER SUSAN LEE RUSSO

Yesterday, January 25, 2018, a two-member panel of the Board of Parole Hearings [BPH] granted parole to inmate Susan Lee Russo over the objections of her daughters and the Fresno County District Attorney's Office.

Inmate Russo was convicted in 1995 after a jury trial for the First-Degree Murder and Conspiracy to Commit Murder of her husband, Senior Chief Petty Officer David Russo. The jury also found that inmate Russo committed the murder for Financial Gain and by Lying in Wait. Russo was also convicted of Solicitation to Commit Murder of a co-defendant. She was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

In a letter to BPH by the trial judge, The Honorable Ralph Nunez stated that inmate Russo "should never be released on parole" and hoped the Governor's Office felt the same way. In spite of that and over the objection of this office, Governor Jerry Brown commuted Russo's sentence on April 15, 2017, making her eligible for the hearing.

Previous media coverage of these crimes and the effect on the family of Senior Chief David Russo can be found at:

<http://www.fresnobee.com/news/local/article144870924.html>

<http://abc30.com/news/gov-brown-pardons-fresno-county-woman-who-conspired-husbands-murder-in-1994/1878540/>

<http://www.fresnobee.com/news/local/crime/article144965654.html>

<http://abc30.com/news/sisters-demand-mom-stay-in-prison-after-she-is-granted-commutation-from-orchestrating-husbands-1994-murder-/1886433/>

<http://www.yourcentralvalley.com/news/woman-convicted-of-husbands-murder-has-sentence-reduced-by-gov-brown-could-get-parole/693478898>

A previous press release regarding the Governor's decision to commute inmate Russo's sentence can be found at <http://www.co.fresno.ca.us/Home/ShowDocument?id=8002>

The decision of the BPH panel is not final. Governor Brown must still review the decision to grant parole and can reverse the decision or refer the decision to BPH for a review by the full board. In conjunction with the family and friends of Senior Chief David Russo, the Fresno County District Attorney's office will continue fighting to keep inmate Susan Lee Russo in prison. To quote Fresno County Supervisor Buddy Mendes, "Where is justice for David?"

The media may e-mail FCDAMedia@co.fresno.ca.us or contact Administrative Assistant Leslie Gillespie at (559)600-4442 with questions.

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