



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF TULARE

Tim Ward, *District Attorney*

PRESS RELEASE

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G. DANIEL WALKER DENIED PAROLE FOR 1973 MURDER

On Thursday, January 11, 2018, at Salinas Valley State Prison, a California parole board denied parole for Gerald Daniel Walker, age 86, for murder. Walker received a 5 year denial and is not eligible for another hearing until 2023.

On February 27, 1973, deputies at the Tulare County Sheriff's Office received a call from Beverly Hills that something terrible had happened at River Valley Ranch in Springville. Deputies responded and the body of the victim, William Ashlock, an advertising executive from Los Angeles, was located in a bedroom of the ranch house wrapped in a bedspread. He had been shot in the head. Investigation established that Ashlock, Walker, and Hope Nivens Masters were at the ranch. Walker was under the guise of being a photojournalist profiling Ashlock's status as an "eligible bachelor" in Los Angeles, and Masters was the daughter of a partial owner of the ranch. After the murder, the pair travelled to Beverly Hills where Walker (using Tyler Taylor as his name) told Tulare County authorities that Masters had witnessed a murder and that her life was in danger. Masters contacted her parents, telling them she had witnessed a "hit" and had been raped by the killer. Walker was located in early March using Ashlock's credit cards at a hotel in Hollywood. Masters later testified against Walker at his trial. He was found guilty by a Porterville jury of first-degree murder in 1974 and sentenced to life in prison.

Walker had previously been convicted of armed robbery in Florida in 1954, armed robbery in Ohio in 1958, and shooting an Illinois state trooper in the head in 1969, a crime in which he later escaped from incarceration by faking a medical condition. Walker was also suspected in a number of violent crimes, including murder, throughout the United States.

The murder case drew national attention at the time. A book, *A Death in California*, was published in 1981 about the crime and subsequent prosecution. A television miniseries of the same name adapted from the book aired in 1985 on ABC.

This was Walker's 13th parole hearing. The District Attorney's Office regularly attends life parole hearings and a Supervising Deputy District Attorney argued against the inmate's release in this case.

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