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For Immediate Release

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# Parole Granted for Inmate Tony Hicks, Who at Age 14, Murdered Tariq Khamisa

The State Board of Parole today granted parole to **Tony Hicks**, 38, who killed 20-year old **Tariq Khamisa** during an attempted robbery in 1995. Khamisa was attempting to deliver a pizza to a bogus address given by the inmate and his accomplices when he was shot and killed by Hicks. Hicks, who was 14 years old at the time, was tried as an adult, pled guilty and was sentenced to 25 years-to-life in prison. At the request of the victim's family, San Diego County District Attorney Summer Stephan attended Hicks' parole hearing today.

The Parole Board hearing was held this morning at the California Men's Colony in San Luis Obispo, California and lasted about six hours. The Board announced its decision after deliberating for about an hour. This was Hicks' first parole hearing which included a discussion of his criminal record, psychiatric factors and parole plans. During his time in prison, Hicks was cited for numerous violations for misconduct including an incident in 2002 when he attacked a correctional officer with a homemade knife.

The District Attorney's Office did not formally oppose or favor parole, but provided the Board with a lengthy letter outlining key considerations and public safety concerns. Typically, prosecutors formally oppose parole at an inmate's first hearing, especially if that person has committed a violent act in prison.

**"The case is unique and compelling. As an adult, Mr. Hicks committed a serious, violent offense during his incarceration several years after the murder," DA Summer Stephan said. "We also consider his young age at the time of the murder, the fact that he has been free of violations in prison for two years, and the support he has waiting for him on the outside, which are all factors in his favor. Ultimately, the parole board weighed all those factors and made a decision based on whether or not he poses a unreasonable, current threat to public safety. I respect the board's decision as well as the views of the victim's family who have turned their personal tragedy into a force for good. It's my sincere hope that Mr. Hicks will become a productive member of the community upon his release."**

Following the murder, Khamisa's father, Azim Khamisa and Hicks' grandfather, Ples Felix, formed the [Tariq Khamisa Foundation](#), an organization devoted to forgiveness and stopping gang violence. Khamisa's family members and Felix have been advocating for Hicks to be released.

The Governor's Office will receive the case within 120 days for review. If the Governor takes no action, Hicks will be released in 2019.

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**About the San Diego County District Attorney's Office**

*The San Diego County DA's Office prosecutes all felony crimes in the county and misdemeanor crimes committed outside the City of San Diego. The office files about 40,000 criminal cases a year and balances prosecution with numerous crime prevention programs. District Attorney Summer Stephan leads the office of more than 1,000 dedicated employees who pursue justice and support victims daily across San Diego County. DA Summer Stephan has devoted her life to protecting children and families and providing justice to the voiceless and most vulnerable. She is a national leader in the fight against sexual exploitation and human trafficking, and has served as a Deputy District Attorney in San Diego County for 28 years.*

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