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Defendant Convicted of Murder, But Released from Prison Under New Laws, Robs and Stabs Stranger

A murderer sentenced to 196 years-to-life in prison, who was released under Prop 57 and Senate Bill 1391 just four months ago, was charged today with a violent robbery after he allegedly took cash from a stranger and stabbed him in the back, causing his lung to collapse.

Dejon Satterwhite, 31, was arraigned in Superior Court today and charged with robbery with allegations of causing great bodily injury and using a deadly weapon. A judge ordered the defendant to be held on \$2 million bail. If convicted of all the charges he faces up to nine years in prison.

On March 11, prosecutors say Satterwhite asked a man for money and offered to share heroin and methamphetamine with the stranger. When the defendant saw that the victim had a roll of money tucked in his socks, the defendant snatched all of the victim's money and started to flee. When the victim pursued Satterwhite, he stabbed the victim in the back, puncturing the victim's left lung. When police arrived, the victim was blacking out from blood-loss.

In court today, Deputy District Attorney Jack Yeh detailed Satterwhite's criminal history and previous conviction. When Satterwhite was 15-years old, he and three fellow gang members committed two drive-by shootings and a third shooting on Highway 163. Two people died and three others were wounded in the shootings. As a result, Satterwhite was convicted in adult criminal court of two counts of special circumstance murder and three counts of attempted murder. He was sentenced to 196 years-to-life in state prison.

While post-conviction hearings were taking place, Proposition 57 was passed in California, requiring transfer hearings for all defendants 14-years old and older to determine if they are inappropriate for juvenile court. Before this defendant could be brought to a transfer hearing, the legislature passed Senate Bill 1391, allowing transfer hearings only for those 16-years old and older. Since Satterwhite was 15-years old at the time he participated in the murders, he could not be transferred, and his convictions were changed into juvenile true-findings. As a result, he was released from custody in October of 2020.

Less than six months later, Satterwhite committed the alleged robbery.

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“This defendant is an imminent danger to the community,” Deputy DA Yeh said in court. “He had proved this to be true when he participated in the 2004 murders and he demonstrated that he lacks the capacity to change when he allegedly robbed and stabbed a stranger, leaving him for dead.” Approved by voters in 2016, Proposition 57 increased parole chances for felons convicted of nonviolent crimes and gave them more opportunities to earn credits for good behavior.

Satterwhite is due back in court on April 12 for a readiness hearing.

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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 fair and equal justice, and support victims daily across San Diego County.