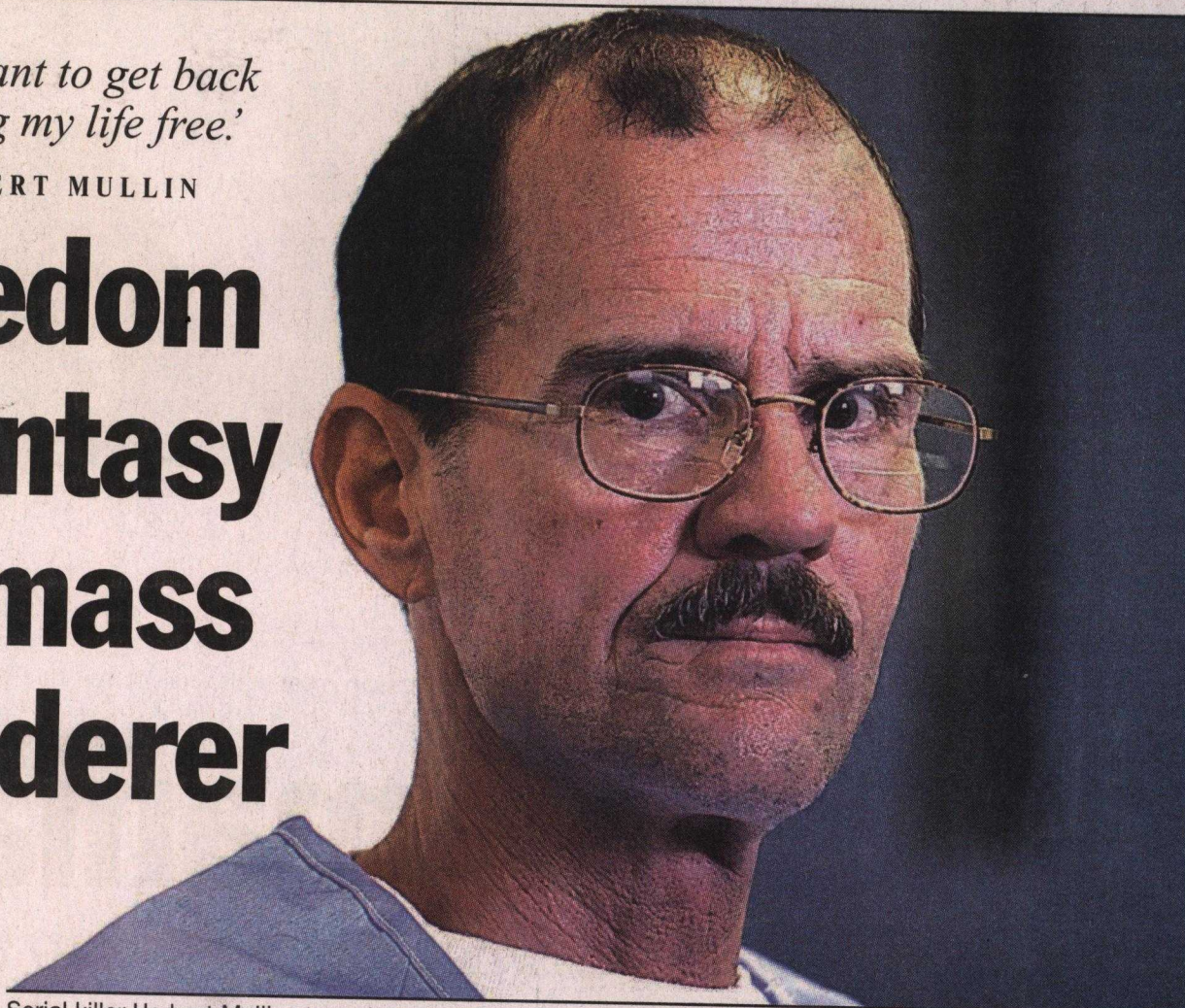


*'I just want to get back
to living my life free.'*

HERBERT MULLIN

Freedom a fantasy for mass murderer



Serial killer Herbert Mullin stares intently during his parole hearing Wednesday at Mule Creek State Prison.

Mullin will have to wait another 5 years for parole chance

Herbert Mullin's victims

Lawrence White, 55
Mary Guilfoyle, 24
Rev. Henri Tomei, 64
James Gianera, 24
Joan Gianera, 23
Kathleen Prentiss,
also known as
Kathy Francis, 30
David Hughes, 9
Daemon Francis, 4
Robert Spector, 18
David Oliker, 18
Brian Scott Card, 19
Mark Dreibelbis, 19
Fred Perez, 72

By DONNA JONES
SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

IONE — Herbert William Mullin wants to come home to Santa Cruz County. He'd like to live in Boulder Creek and find a wife. He's thought about auditing a psychology course at UC Santa Cruz. He says he would be a hard-working, law-abiding citizen.

But Wednesday the California Board of Prison Terms refused to release the convicted serial killer, saying he should stay behind bars for at least another five years, the maximum time allowed between hearings.

Mullin was convicted in 1973 of 10 slayings in Santa Cruz County and one in Santa Clara County.

The panel's action came after a roughly two-hour hearing at Mule Creek State Prison, during which Mullin discussed his guilt, his life in



Santa Cruz
County prosecutor
Ariadne Symons
and Santa Clara
County prosecutor
Ronald Rico listen
as serial killer Her-
bert Mullin speaks
at his parole hear-
ing Wednesday.

Shmuel Thaler/
Sentinel photos

prison and his hopes for the future.

"I just want to get back to living my life free," the 1965 San Lorenzo Valley High School graduate told the panel of two commissioners, whose identities are kept confidential under prison rules.

Mullin's convictions stem from a five-month killing spree in late 1972

and early 1973. His victims included strangers and acquaintances, men and women. He killed a woman and her two young sons, ages 4 and 9, shooting them all in the head and stabbing the 4-year-old in the back. He stabbed a 64-year-old Catholic

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Mullin

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priest in a confessional booth in a Los Gatos church.

Though he was convicted in 11 murders, he's confessed to killing 13.

"This is ugly. These are very ugly crimes you've been convicted of," a commissioner said.

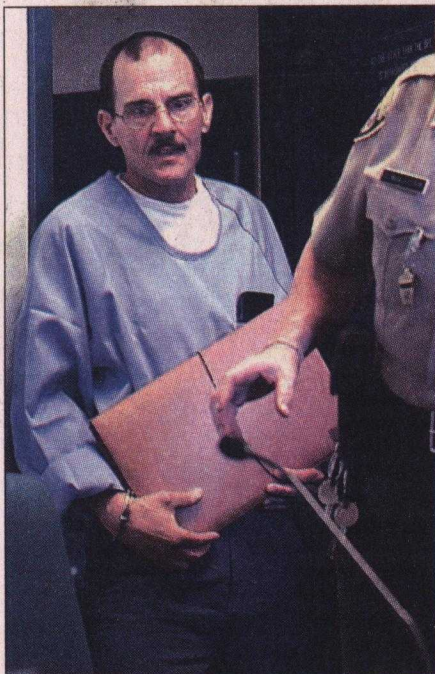
As the commissioner recited the names of his victims and the circumstances of their deaths, Mullin was calm, impassive, a lifted eyebrow or turn of the head the only signs of any agitation.

Though he was argumentative at times, he maintained that composure throughout the hearing.

"The people I am accused of killing, I did kill," Mullin said after the commissioner finished. "(But) I'm not guilty by reason of insanity."

Mullin was 26 when he entered the state prison system. Now he's less than a month away from his 59th birthday. He's a slight man, dwarfed by the male and female correctional officers who escorted him, shackled, into the hearing room. He's balding and wears large wire-rim glasses.

Though in 1973 Mullin said he killed to prevent earthquakes, he didn't give that explanation when asked about his motivation Wednesday. Instead he said he was suffering from "undifferentiated schizophrenia" at the time.



Shmuel Thaler/Sentinel

Serial killer Herbert Mullin enters his parole hearing at Mule Creek State Prison on Wednesday.

"I was not a thinking individual," he said, blaming his parents for "denying him maturity" and "not teaching me the facts of life."

His parents didn't explain the "pecking

order" to him, he explained, as an example, adding he's learned about the system of deference to those in power while in prison.

"The state should be punishing my parents, at least chastising them publicly," Mullin said. "They're the ones who made me do it. They put me in a situation where I became mentally insane."

Mullin said his parents have since died.

Back then, Mullin said he was having a "terrible time." He took LSD and marijuana, was in and out of mental hospitals, and sought outpatient treatment in Santa Cruz.

But he's changed, he said. He's healed. He attends Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, and hasn't taken any kind of medication since 1976.

He's taken vocational courses in cooking, landscaping and cabinetry, and studied tai chi.

According to a prison report read at the hearing, he's worked as a janitor for the past five years, and received positive evaluations from his supervisor.

Mullin suggested grocery clerk or gas station attendant as possible employment opportunities if he were released.

A commissioner reminded him the world had changed while he was in prison, and that gas stations were now self-serve.

Mullin insisted he was ready to face the world, to be a benefit to society and to demonstrate rehabilitation works.

"I'm extremely remorseful and sorrowful for my part in committing this crime,"

Mullin said. "I pray for the souls of the victims every day."

But Santa Cruz County prosecutor Ariadne Symons, sitting a few feet away from Mullin, said his "disregard for human suffering was astonishing." He had no words for the families of his victims, she said.

As to his plan to seek shelter and help finding a job at New Life Community Services in Santa Cruz, Symons said it's doubtful he could find a place.

Symons said she serves on the agency's board, and those who seek help there must accept responsibility for their actions, something Mullin has never done.

"I don't care how well he behaves in prison," she said, urging the commissioners to keep Mullin locked up. "Prison is also about retribution. He's spent 32 years in prison and he hasn't begun to pay his debt to society, not only for the 13 people (he killed) but also for the families, the loved ones in this community."

Parole was denied because of the "cruel and callous" manner in which Mullin carried out his crimes, the fact that he hadn't accepted responsibility for them and the continuing danger he poses to society, a commissioner said, explaining the decision to Mullin.

"You are not the victim here," he said. "The victims and their families are the victims. You are the individual that made them victims."

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