

Parole board won't release serial killer

Herbert Mullin, convicted of 11 murders, will continue serving life term

Mullin Herbert
SENTINEL WIRE SERVICES

IONE — The man responsible for a series of murders in Santa Cruz County in the early '70s was denied parole Thursday.

Herbert William Mullin, 54, will continue serving a life sentence for the murders.

He confessed to killing 13 people in Santa Cruz and Santa Clara counties. He was arrested in February 1973 immediately following the shooting of a retired fisherman at his Gharkey Street home.

Mullin was convicted for 11 of his killings in Santa Cruz County. He said during his trial that he committed the murders at the command of voices in his head.

"The parole board determined Mullin was unsuitable for parole at this time and denied it for four years," said Sean McCray, employee relations officer at Mule Creek State Prison, where Mullin now is kept.

Mullin, who claimed insanity, testified he killed on telepathic orders and that he did so to prevent

a major earthquake predicted for January 1973.

"He couldn't understand why he was being prosecuted, even," said Dr. Donald T. Lunde, the psychiatrist who in the past has testified in Mullin's defense.

There was no death penalty at the time of his trial, and Mullin was sentenced to life in prison, which meant a minimum of seven years.

Mullin said he killed a drifter with a baseball bat and stabbed a hitchhiking student, but he was never tried for those slayings. He was convicted

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of stabbing a priest in his confessional, shooting four camping teens, and killing a Santa Cruz man, his wife, and the wife and small children of another man who lived on Branciforte Road. In those killings, Mullin had claimed that the men had introduced him to marijuana, which had led him into experimentation with other drugs.

Mullin has since blamed many others, including his family, for making him commit the murders, once saying he had been under a curse when he killed.