

Brinks robbery mastermind denied federal parole

Staff and wire reports 10:44 p.m. EDT April 21, 2016

Mutulu Shakur has served 30 years of a 60-year sentence.



(Photo: File photo by Peter Carr/The Journal News)

The leader of the revolutionary group responsible for the slayings of an armed Brinks security guard and two New York police officers in Rockland County in 1981 has been denied parole.

Mutulu Shakur appeared for a parole hearing on April 7 at the federal penitentiary in Victorville, California, after serving 30 years of his 60-year sentence. The 65-year-old was arrested in 1986 for masterminding a string of deadly armed robberies in New York and Connecticut committed by a militant political group known as "The Family."

For the first time, Shakur had been eligible for what's considered to be mandatory parole, but his release was denied by the U.S. Parole Commission, said Justice Department spokesman Peter Carr.

On Oct. 20, 1981, Nyack police Sgt. Edward O'Grady, Officer Waverly "Chipper" Brown and Brinks guard Peter Paige were killed in a robbery carried out by the gang members. Paige was killed at the Nanuet Mall, where the gang members stole \$1.8 million. O'Grady and Brown were murdered less than an hour later at a police roadblock at the Nyack entrance to the state Thruway on Mountainview Avenue.

Those who had family or were themselves intimately connected to the bloodshed on that October day responded to news of Shakur's parole denial with a mix of long-simmering anger and relief.

"For this awful homegrown terrorist attack, we actually allowed people to apply for parole?" asked Maria Daggett, the daughter of Roselyn Daggett who was the aunt of Edward O' Grady's wife. "That is unthinkable. What is denied is justice. I am part of the family that grew up without people in it because of actions by that whole group of people"

"Yet I think this was a wise decision," she added, her voice shaking.

As for the rehabilitation that Shakur says he has undergone in prison, Daggett was more than skeptical.

"I was young, I've learned so much," she said mockingly. "Nah, sorry. I don't buy it."

Former South Nyack Police Chief Alan Colsey helped apprehend three accomplices who crashed one of their getaway vehicles.

"This certainly serves the purpose of justice," Colsey said. "It's a relief."

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Federal officials declined to comment on why Shakur's parole was denied, saying the information is not publicly released. Carr said Shakur would be eligible for parole again in two years.

Although federal parole was abolished in 1987, it is still granted for inmates convicted before then. Under the rules in place at the time of his conviction, parole is considered mandatory unless the commission finds a prisoner is likely to reoffend or has frequently violated prison rules.

Shakur was added to the FBI's Ten Most Wanted Fugitives list and remained on the run until he was arrested in Los Angeles.

Shakur was also charged with helping a fellow revolutionary, Joanne Chesimard, escape from a New Jersey prison, where she was serving a sentence for killing a New Jersey state trooper in 1973. An accomplice testified at Shakur's trial that armed members of his revolutionary group had visited the prison, captured two guards and then drove Chesimard out in a prison van. He said Shakur was protecting the escape route.



Brinks armored-car guard Peter Paige (Photo: File photo/*The Journal News*)



Brinks memorial on Mountainview Avenue entrance to the New York State Thruway in Nyack. (Photo: File photo)

Chesimard, who now goes by the name Assata Shakur, fled to Cuba and remains at large. She was granted asylum by Fidel Castro, but some U.S. officials have pushed for her to be extradited to the U.S. after the countries re-established diplomatic relations.

During his incarceration, Shakur amassed a large group of supporters, many of whom believe he is a political prisoner. They have coordinated letter-writing and phone campaigns to demand his release and also solicit donations for his legal fund.

Shakur's attorney did not immediately respond to a request for comment Thursday afternoon.

Staff writer Gabriel Rom and the Associated Press contributed to this report.

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