



Menendez Brothers: Prosecutors Push for Resentencing in 1989 Family Murders

Description

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Prosecutors are poised to recommend that Erik and Lyle Menendez undergo resentencing pertaining to the 1989 murders of their parents within the confines of their Beverly Hills residence, thereby offering the brothers a potential pathway to freedom after 34 years of incarceration.

During a news conference on Thursday, Los Angeles County District Attorney George Gascón disclosed that his office would advocate for a new sentence of 50 years to life. Given that the brothers were under 26 years of age at the time of the offenses, they would be eligible for parole immediately, he indicated.

“I have reached a conclusion that, according to the law, resentencing is warranted,” Gascón announced, acknowledging that some members of his office hold opposing views on the matter.

The petition is expected to be filed on Friday, with a judicial hearing anticipated within the coming month.

In 1996, the Menendez brothers received life sentences without the possibility of parole for the killings.

Lyle Menendez, aged 21, and Erik Menendez, aged 18, confessed to fatally shooting their entertainment executive father, Jose Menendez, and their mother, Kitty Menendez. They asserted that their actions stemmed from a profound fear that their parents would kill them to conceal years of sexual abuse perpetrated by their father against Erik.

Family Advocacy for the Brothers' Release

The brothers' extended family has fervently advocated for their release, contending that after decades of incarceration, they are deserving of freedom. Numerous family members have expressed that, given today's heightened awareness of sexual abuse's ramifications, the Menendez brothers likely would not have faced first-degree murder charges or received life sentences.

Several relatives, including their aunt Joan Andersen VanderMolen, attended the news conference to demonstrate their support, having traveled across the country on short notice.

Mark Geragos, representing the brothers legally, refrained from disclosing whether he had communicated with Lyle and Erik on Thursday; however, he expressed confidence that they were aware of the district attorney's decision. Geragos also mentioned that a “reentry plan” had already been formulated to aid the brothers' reintegration into society should they be released.

Anamaria Baralt, a niece of Jose Menendez, remarked that the district attorney's “courageous and necessary” decision would afford the brothers the opportunity to begin healing from their traumatic pasts.

The Menendez brothers faced two trials for their parents' murders, the first concluding with a hung jury.

During this period, prosecutors maintained that there was a lack of evidence supporting claims of molestation, and many specifics related to the alleged sexual abuse were disqualified from the second trial. The prosecution also suggested that the brothers were motivated by a desire to inherit their parents' substantial estate.

District Attorney Acknowledges the Brothers' Rehabilitation

Gascón indicated that he finalized his decision merely an hour prior to the news conference, informing family members just moments beforehand.

In spite of their life sentences, Gascón asserted that the brothers have engaged in efforts toward redemption and rehabilitation during their time in prison.

"I believe they have fulfilled their responsibilities to society," he stated.

Opposition to the resentencing exists among certain members of the Menendez family. Milton Andersen, Kitty Menendez's 90-year-old brother, has had his attorneys submit a legal brief urging the court to maintain the brothers' original sentences, contending, "They shot their mother, Kitty, reloading to ensure her death. The evidence clearly supports the jury's verdict, reflecting an appropriate punishment for this egregious crime."

Geragos opted not to respond to Andersen's legal representatives' statement.

Although Kitty Menendez was not charged with facilitating the abuse, evidence presented in her sons' legal documents implies complicity. A cousin testified during the initial trial that Lyle confided in her about his fear of sleeping due to his father's inappropriate behavior. When relayed to Kitty Menendez, she purportedly responded with anger, dragging Lyle upstairs, according to the petition.

Another family member disclosed that when Jose Menendez was alone with one of the boys, others were forbidden from traversing the hallway.

The Impact of Political Climate in Los Angeles

The Los Angeles district attorney finds himself in the midst of a challenging reelection campaign against former federal prosecutor Nathan Hochman, who has criticized Gascón's progressive reforms, attributing rising crime rates and recent murders to his policies.

On Thursday, Gascón mentioned that his office has recommended resentencing for around 300 incarcerated individuals, including those convicted of murder.

Hochman questioned the timing of Gascón's announcement, interpreting it as a "desperate political maneuver" occurring less than two weeks before the election. He argued that without access to confidential records and relevant witnesses, forming an informed opinion on the case is unattainable.

"Should I assume office as DA and the case remains open, I would conduct a review consistent with my standard procedures," Hochman stated.



Geragos expressed confidence that the district attorney had been diligently reviewing the case well before any electoral considerations arose.

Laurie Levenson, a criminal law professor at Loyola Law School in Los Angeles, cautioned that the judge would likely exercise scrutiny regarding the resentencing recommendation due to visible discord within Gascón's office.

"This complicates the position of the judge significantly," Levenson remarked, noting the rarity of such dissent among prosecutors. Ultimately, she indicated that Gascón opted for the "safest course" by allowing the court and parole board to make the final decisions.

Geragos expressed optimism about the possibility of the brothers' release by Thanksgiving, although Levenson deemed this timeframe "overly optimistic."

The Menendez case has recently regained media attention following Netflix's release of the true-crime series, *Monsters: The Lyle and Erik Menendez Story*.

Evidence currently under review includes a letter penned by Erik Menendez, which his legal team asserts corroborates his claims of sexual abuse by their father.

Roy Rossello, a former member of the Latin pop group Menudo, also stepped forward, alleging he was drugged and raped by Jose Menendez during the 1980s. At that time, Menudo was under RCA Records, an entity that Jose Menendez oversaw.

Rossello recounted his traumatic experiences in the 2023 Peacock docuseries *Menendez + Menudo: Boys Betrayed*. His allegations are incorporated into the evidence referenced in the petition filed last year by the Menendez brothers' attorneys, aligning with Erik Menendez's claims of abuse.

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This report has been enriched by contributions from Associated Press videojournalist Thomas Peipert in Denver. ___ Note: The spelling of Milton Andersen's name has been corrected to reflect its accuracy.

Vocabulary List:

1. **Incarceration** /ɪn,kɑːr.sə'reɪ.jən/ (noun): The state of being confined in prison.
2. **Resentencing** /,rɪ:'sen.tə.sɪŋ/ (noun): The act of issuing a new sentence for a crime.
3. **Advocate** /'æd.və.keɪt/ (verb): To publicly support or recommend a particular cause or policy.
4. **Complicity** /kəm'plɪs.ɪ.ti/ (noun): The state of being involved with others in wrongdoing.
5. **Ramifications** /,ræm.ɪ.fi'keɪ.jənz/ (noun): Consequences or outcomes resulting from a particular action or decision.
6. **Opposing** /ə'pɒz.zɪŋ/ (adjective): In conflict or disagreement; resisting or countering.



Comprehension Questions

Multiple Choice

1. What sentence length is the Los Angeles County District Attorney recommending for the Menendez brothers?
Option: Life imprisonment without parole
Option: 50 years to life
Option: 20 years with parole
Option: Life with possibility of release after 30 years
2. At what age were Erik and Lyle Menendez when they committed the murders of their parents?
Option: Over 30 years old
Option: Between 26 and 30 years old
Option: Under 26 years old
Option: Under 18 years old
3. What was the initial verdict for the Menendez brothers in their first trial for their parents' murders?
Option: Not guilty
Option: Life imprisonment without parole
Option: Death penalty
Option: Hung jury
4. What familial relation is Anamaria Baralt to Jose Menendez?
Option: Niece
Option: Sister
Option: Cousin
Option: Daughter
5. Who criticized the Los Angeles District Attorney for his progressive reforms?
Option: Nathan Hochman
Option: Mark Geragos
Option: Roy Rossello
Option: Laurie Levenson
6. What recent true-crime series has brought attention back to the Menendez case?



- Option: Monsters: The Lyle and Erik Menendez Story
- Option: Breaking Bad
- Option: Making a Murderer
- Option: The Ted Bundy Tapes

True-False

7. The Menendez brothers received life sentences without the possibility of parole for their parents' murders.
8. Milton Andersen, Kitty Menendez's brother, supports the resentencing of Erik and Lyle Menendez.
9. Erik Menendez penned a letter corroborating allegations of sexual abuse by his father.
10. Nathan Hochman is the incumbent Los Angeles District Attorney.
11. Mark Geragos expressed optimism about the potential release of the Menendez brothers by Thanksgiving.
12. Netflix released the true-crime series "Monsters: The Lyle and Erik Menendez Story."

Gap-Fill

13. The Menendez brothers were under 26 years old at the time of the murders, making them eligible for parole immediately. If the resentencing petition is granted, they could potentially be released after serving _____ years in prison.
14. Nathan Hochman, the challenger in the Los Angeles District Attorney race, criticized Gascón's announcement as a "desperate political maneuver" less than _____ weeks before the election.
15. Anamaria Baralt remarked that the district attorney's decision would provide the Menendez brothers



the opportunity to start healing from their traumatic pasts, emphasizing the _____
and necessary nature of the decision.

16. The Los Angeles District Attorney has recommended resentencing for approximately
_____ incarcerated individuals, including those convicted of murder.

17. Laurie Levenson, a criminal law professor at Loyola Law School in Los Angeles, noted the unusual
_____ within Gascón's office concerning the resentencing recommendation.

18. Recent evidence under review includes claims by Roy Rossello, a former member of Menudo, who
alleged that he was drugged and raped by Jose Menendez during the _____.

Answer

Multiple Choice: 1. 50 years to life 2. Under 26 years old 3. Hung jury 4. Niece 5. Nathan Hochman 6.
Monsters: The Lyle and Erik Menendez Story

True-False: 7. True 8. False 9. True 10. False 11. True 12. True

Gap-Fill: 13. 34 14. two 15. courageous 16. 300 17. discord 18. 1980s

Vocabulary quizzes

Multiple Choice (Select the Correct answer for each question.)

1. Who brings a case against another in a court of law?

Option: Defendant

Option: Judge

Option: Plaintiff

Option: Witness

2. What is the process of working together to achieve a common goal?

Option: Compromise

Option: Retaliation

Option: Collaboration

Option: Integrity



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3. Which term means to scold or reprimand someone?
- Option: Facilitating
 - Option: Alleged
 - Option: Admonished
 - Option: Safeguard
4. What does it mean to be involved in a wrongful act?
- Option: Opposing
 - Option: Advocate
 - Option: Complicity
 - Option: Ramifications
5. Which term refers to the state of being confined to prison?
- Option: Ostracized
 - Option: Incarceration
 - Option: Resentencing
 - Option: Premise
6. What is the medical term for multiple serious injuries?
- Option: Hemorrhage
 - Option: Paranoia
 - Option: Concoction
 - Option: Polytrauma
7. Which term describes substances that affect mental or cognitive functions?
- Option: Toxicology
 - Option: Psychoactive
 - Option: Coerced
 - Option: Allegations
8. What are assertions made with little or no proof?
- Option: Integrity
 - Option: Alleged
 - Option: Inappropriate
 - Option: Allegations
9. What term means to be against or in conflict with something?
- Option: Facilitating
 - Option: Retaliatory
 - Option: Opposing
 - Option: Scrutiny



10. Which term refers to a settlement of differences in which each side makes concessions?

Option: Compromise

Option: Integrates

Option: Underworld

Option: Confidential

Gap-Fill (Fill in the blanks with the correct word from the vocabulary list.)

11. Sensitive information was kept _____ to protect privacy.

12. The company faced a _____ lawsuit after firing the employee.

13. He always acted with _____ and honesty in his work.

14. The entire argument is based on a false _____.

15. The detective went undercover to investigate the criminal _____.

16. The new technology is aimed at _____ communication between teams.

17. The _____ thief was caught on camera stealing the jewelry.

18. His behavior at the meeting was deemed _____ by the management.

19. It is the duty of the security guard to _____ the premises at night.

20. The judge ordered a _____ after new evidence came to light.

Matching Sentences (Match each definition to the correct word from the vocabulary list.)

21. The confession seemed to have been obtained by force or threats.
22. The financial records were under careful examination and review.
23. The new software seamlessly blends with the existing systems.
24. She felt excluded and ignored by her former friends.
25. The decision had far-reaching consequences on the company.



26. She strongly supports a particular cause or policy.
27. The study of the adverse effects of chemicals on living organisms.
28. Severe bleeding from a ruptured blood vessel is a sign of this condition.
29. The chef prepared a unique mix of flavors in his signature dish.
30. He had an irrational fear that someone was constantly watching him.

Answer

Multiple Choice: 1. Plaintiff 2. Collaboration 3. Admonished 4. Complicity 5. Incarceration 6. Polytrauma
7. Psychoactive 8. Allegations 9. Opposing 10. Compromise

Gap-Fill: 11. Confidential 12. Retaliatory 13. Integrity 14. Premise 15. Underworld 16. Facilitating 17. Alleged
18. Inappropriate 19. Safeguard 20. Resentencing

Matching sentence: 1. Coerced 2. Scrutiny 3. Integration 4. Ostracized 5. Ramifications 6. Advocate
7. Toxicology 8. Hemorrhage 9. Concoction 10. Paranoia

CATEGORY

1. Entertainment - LEVEL5

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