


JEFFREY S. ROSELL  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY



**OFFICE OF  
THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ**

Santa Cruz  
701 Ocean Street, Room 200  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060  
(831) 454-2400  
[dao@co.santa-cruz.ca.us](mailto:dao@co.santa-cruz.ca.us)

**Website**

<http://datinternet.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/>

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact: Alex Byers (831) 454-3181**

**HEARING SET ON PROPOSED PLACEMENT OF CONVICTED SEX OFFENDER MICHAEL THOMAS CHEEK  
WATSONVILLE AND SANTA CRUZ MOTELS CONSIDERED**

**BACKGROUND:** Michael Thomas Cheek was convicted of kidnapping, rape, and forcible oral copulation of a 21-year-old woman in Santa Cruz County in 1980. Prior to serving his sentence, Cheek was transferred to Contra Costa County to face allegations that he violated the terms of his probation. Unfortunately, Cheek escaped from a jail facility and fled to Lake County where he committed a second rape, a 15-year-old teen.

In 1997, the Santa Cruz County District Attorney successfully petitioned to have Cheek declared a sexually violent predator (SVP) under the Sexually Violent Predator Act and Cheek was committed to the Department of State Hospitals for sex offender treatment. A sexually violent predator is an individual who, due to a diagnosed mental disorder, is predisposed to the commission of criminal sexual acts and constitutes a danger to the health and safety of others.

In 2019, the Department of State Hospitals deemed Cheek an appropriate candidate for conditional release and the Honorable Judge Stephen Seigel ordered his conditional release to Santa Cruz County. Between 2019 to 2026, the Department of State Hospitals and Liberty Healthcare were unsuccessful in their attempts to find an appropriate placement for Cheek.

On August 11, 2025, the Honorable Judge Nancy de la Pena ordered Liberty Healthcare to prepare a transient release plan for Cheek and on March 20, 2026, the Honorable Judge Nancy de la Pena scheduled a hearing to be held for a potential placement of Cheek.

**HEARING INFORMATION:** When: May 22, 2026, at 1:30p.m.  
Where: Santa Cruz County Superior Court Department 6

**PROPOSED PLACEMENT LOCATIONS:** Valley Inn, 970 Main Street, Watsonville  
Ocean Gate Inn, 111 Ocean Street, Santa Cruz

Per the proposal, Valley Inn would be the primary placement location.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** No public comment will be heard at the hearing. The public is invited to attend the hearing or submit comment in writing via email to [criminalinfo@santacruzcourt.org](mailto:criminalinfo@santacruzcourt.org) or via mail to Superior Court, 701 Ocean Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060. All comments must be submitted by April 27, 2026.

**REMOTE PARTICIPATION:** Remote participation will be permitted at the hearing.  
(Link: <https://santacruzcourt-org.zoomgov.com/j/1603307728>)