

Street gang founder cleared for execution - Stanley Williams, who helped organize the Crips, could face death as early as next year.

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SAN FRANCISCO -- A convicted killer who co-founded the Crips **street gang** and later became a Nobel Peace Prize nominee has been **cleared for execution** by a federal appeals court.

Stanley Williams could be executed by injection as early as next year unless the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals reconsiders its decision, the U.S. Supreme Court intervenes or the governor grants him clemency.

Williams and a high school friend, Raymond Washington, created the notorious Crips **gang** in Los Angeles in 1971. Hundreds of spinoffs and copycat **gangs** have since emerged across the nation.

Washington was killed in a **gang** fight in 1979. Williams, "Big Took" to his fellow **gang** members, continued his violent ways and transformed the Crips into a national enterprise.

Williams, now 48, was convicted of killing four people in 1979. While appealing his death sentence, he has spent time writing children's books and coordinating an international peace effort **for** youths -- all from his 9-by-4-foot cell at San Quentin State Prison.

The work has landed him Nobel Peace Prize nominations the past two years, but his efforts haven't swayed prosecutors and police groups who believe he should remain behind bars.

"He's created one of the biggest criminal networks that the world has ever seen. I will be glad to see him executed," said Deputy Attorney General Lisa J. Brault. "I don't think writing a few children's books negates what he has done."

Williams was sentenced to death in 1981 **for** fatally shooting a convenience store worker. He was also convicted of killing two Los Angeles motel owners and their daughter during a robbery a few days later.

Williams claims he is innocent.

Despite its decision Tuesday, the appeals court seemed sympathetic to Williams' plight.

"Although Williams' good works and accomplishments since incarceration may make him a worthy candidate **for** the exercise of gubernatorial discretion, they are not matters that we in the federal judiciary are at liberty to take into consideration," Judge Procter Hug Jr. wrote.

A spokesman **for** Gov. Gray Davis said it's too soon to know whether the governor will intervene.

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