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Menendez Brothers Eye Potential New Trial Amid Parole Bid

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The Menendez brothers, Lyle and Erik, convicted in the 1989 shotgun killings of their parents in Beverly Hills, may have a fresh legal lifeline after a California judge ruled that new evidence could justify a complete retrial. At the same time, the brothers are preparing to plead their case for parole in a hearing set for next month.

Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge William C. Ryan ruled last week that the brothers had made a “prima facie” showing for habeas corpus relief. This means the court found

enough new evidence presented to warrant further examination. This could ultimately lead to their original conviction being vacated and the case retried from the beginning.

Now in their 50s, the Menendez brothers have spent over 35 years behind bars after being sentenced to life without parole for the brutal murders of Jose and Mary “Kitty” Menendez.

Fresh Evidence

According to court filings, the brothers are relying on two major pieces of newly surfaced evidence. The first is a letter allegedly written by Erik to his cousin in 1988, detailing sexual abuse by their father. The second is an affidavit from Roy Rossello, a former member of the boy band Menudo, who claims that Jose Menendez raped him when he was just 14 years old. Rossello’s accusations date back to the early 1980s, when Jose was a powerful figure in the music industry.

Attorney Brian Wice, a Houston-based legal expert in post-conviction law, told *Fox News Digital* that the implications are significant. “This is not a resentencing,” Wice explained. “This is an entirely new trial. The legal standard here is whether there’s a reasonable probability that the outcome would have been different.”

While the defense argues this new evidence would have reshaped the jury’s view, the Los Angeles County District Attorney’s Office under DA Nathan Hochman remains skeptical. Prosecutors dismissed the Cano letter as too late and labeled the Rossello affidavit as unreliable and irrelevant. Still, Judge Ryan’s order now forces the DA’s office to formally respond and justify why the brothers shouldn’t be granted a new trial.

Wice noted that even if the trial judge agrees to vacate the conviction, the battle is far from over. “That ruling would go up to the California Court of Appeals, and potentially the California Supreme Court. It’s a long road,” he said.

Meanwhile, the brothers are also gearing up for a parole hearing scheduled for August. In May, the court modified their sentence from life without parole to 50 years with the possibility of parole, making this upcoming hearing a crucial moment in their decades-long fight for freedom.

Although some critics argue that revisiting such an old case undermines the finality of justice, supporters say it’s about correcting a deeply flawed trial.