

Ex-S.B. police detective gets 66-year term

Donald J. Meyer sentenced in Nevada robbery, shootout

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A former San Bernardino police detective was sentenced Tuesday in Las Vegas to 66 years in prison for a robbery and shootout at Caesars Palace.

Donald J. Meyer, 51, won't be eligible for parole for 22 years. Unless he asks to be kept isolated in protective custody, he'll be placed among the general prison population, said Nevada Deputy Attorney General Bill Cooper.

"He's not the first ex-cop to go to prison," Cooper said. "And generally, people won't make that request (for protective custody). It's a very lonely existence."

Meyer was a state gaming control agent last January when he held up five hotel guests and disarmed several security guards. He used the guards as a shield and started a gunfight with their rescuers.

He left his robbery victims locked in a bathroom — where they immediately used a phone to summon help. Though quickly confronted, Meyer disarmed a succession of guards and used them as hostages as he retreated toward an entrance.

A jury convicted him last month.

Meyer faced a maximum of 180 years behind bars, Cooper said.

"Nevada is very tough on using

deadly weapons in committing crimes. It automatically doubles any sentence," he said.

Eyewitnesses — including a tearful 9-year-old robbery victim — testified against Meyer at the trial. But the former robbery and homicide detective again proclaimed his innocence at Tuesday's sentencing.

"He said he didn't do it," Cooper said. "He said he had an exemplary police record, which should cause him to be granted some leniency or be placed on probation."

Cooper urged District Judge Joseph Pavlikowski to make an example of the ex-policeman.

Far from having an exemplary record, Cooper said, Meyer admitted during the trial he was forced to resign from the Los Angeles Police Department before moving to San Bernardino.

"I don't have any records to verify that," Cooper said during a telephone interview. "I just asked him (during cross-examination) why he left. He said he was found in a compromising position with a prostitute and was asked to resign."

Meyer is best known in San Bernardino as the chief detective in the murder trial of Roy Summers. Summers spent three years behind bars before being acquitted in October 1982 of killing his ex-wife, Beverly Wise, and kid-

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