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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Re: Parole Hearing on Rodney Cruson

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MODESTO, CALIFORNIA – Stanislaus County District Attorney James Brazelton announced today that Rodney Cruson, age 38, was found unsuitable for parole at an October 21, 2003 hearing of the State Board of Prison Terms at the California Men’s Colony located in San Luis Obispo.

Rodney Cruson was convicted in 1986 of second degree murder, robbery of an inhabited dwelling, and first degree burglary. On January 24, 1986 at around midnight, Mr. Cruson and his partner entered the Modesto home of Harry Foursha, age 70. Despite Mr. Foursha’s debilitating state due to advanced emphysema which required constant use of an oxygen tank, they severely beat him with a hammer, bound, and then gagged him. A coroner’s report indicated the cause of death to be asphyxiation due to the gag. Mr. Cruson and his partner stole two television sets, a shotgun, and an old pickup truck. After he was convicted, Mr. Cruson stated he was strung out on “crank” (methamphetamine) for eight days prior to the offense, and that his motive was to sell the stolen items to get cash and more “crank”.

Deputy District Attorney Jeffrey W. Mangar appeared at the parole hearing and argued that Mr. Cruson still posed an unreasonable risk of harm to society, and particularly to Stanislaus County, where he intended to return upon his release. The victim’s brother, Lowell Foursha, age 80, of Modesto, also addressed the Board by recounting his discovery of his brother’s body several days after his death, and the impact of his brother’s death on his life.

Mr. Cruson is serving a 15 year to life sentence and has previously been denied parole four times. He will be scheduled for another hearing in one year.

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