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PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Date: 10/10/07
Re: Paul Michael Ruiz
Jury Trial Conviction

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Modesto, California – Stanislaus County District Birgit Fladager announced today that **Paul Michael Ruiz**, age 33, of Modesto, was convicted on Tuesday, October 9th, 2007, following a one week jury trial before the Honorable Scott Steffen. Deputy District Attorney John Goulart prosecuted the case on behalf of the People.

On November 9, 2004, Ruiz was arrested by Modesto Police Officers after he was found to be in possession of stolen property from at least five residential burglaries, one of which had occurred just five hours before his arrest. Ruiz was also in possession of a loaded .40 caliber handgun which had been stolen from a Modesto home just a few weeks before that. He was charged with several felony crimes but bailed out of jail while that case was pending.

On the night of July 7th, 2005, Officers conducting a surveillance of Ruiz watched him drive in one car to a home on Enslin Avenue in Modesto. About 15 minutes later, two cars left the home and drove to a canal bank where Ruiz and James Nelson were seen transferring property into the other car, which was driven by Tanisha Flaherty. When Officers went in to make the arrest, all the suspects fled. Flaherty and Nelson were captured while Ruiz escaped. Officers recovered property stolen from the Enslin Avenue home as well as from another home in Modesto that had been previously burglarized in an identical fashion.

Six days later, Ruiz failed to appear in court for a pretrial conference stemming from the felony charges previously filed in his 2004 case. Ruiz remained at large until September 27, 2005, when Officers spotted him in a parking lot near the Red Lion Hotel in Modesto. Ruiz tried once again to escape but was successfully captured by the police.

Ruiz was then charged with additional felony crimes plus the enhancement for committing those crimes while being out on bail. This week, a Stanislaus County Superior Court jury found Ruiz guilty of ten of the twelve felony counts charged. The jury convicted him of two residential burglaries, five counts of possession of stolen property, one count of auto theft, and one count of being in possession of a controlled substance. He was acquitted of one count of burglary and one count of grand theft of a firearm.

A court trial is scheduled for Tuesday, October 16th, before the Honorable Scott Steffen, to decide the remaining prior serious felony conviction and prison term allegations in the Ruiz case, including whether he committed these felonies while out on bail.

Defendant James Nelson was previously convicted and sentenced in September, 2005 to serve a total of three years four months in state prison for his role in the Enslin Avenue burglary and also for violating probation in two previous felony cases.

Defendant Tanisha Flaherty was convicted on May 15th, 2006 for her role in two residential burglaries. She was sentenced to a total of nine years four months in state prison.

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