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PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Contact: Carol Shipley

Date: April 21, 2009

Assistant District Attorney

Re: Raymond Joey Dale Arias

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Auto Thief Sentenced to 16 Months in Prison

**Modesto, California** – Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Raymond Joey Dale Arias, age 26, of Modesto, was convicted of auto theft, evading a peace officer, and driving under the influence. Deputy District Attorney Jeff Mangar prosecuted the case for the People.

The case arose out of events that occurred on two separate days. During the early morning hours of December 11, 2008 in the area of Hammond Street and Robertson Road in Modesto, a Sheriff's deputy observed a 1994 orange GMC pick-up traveling approximately 50 mph in a 25 mph zone. When the deputy turned on his siren and red lights to perform a routine traffic stop, the truck accelerated up to 80 mph in the residential area and failed to stop at red traffic lights or stop signs at Robertson Road, Vernon Avenue, Paradise Road, Martin Luther King Drive, and California Avenue until the vehicle lost control and crashed. When deputies approached the driver's side door, Arias tried to claim that he wasn't the driver even though the deputy was talking to him as he was seated in the front driver's seat. A blood test revealed that Arias had a blood alcohol level of .21 %.

On New Year's Eve, December 31, 2008 at around 10 p.m. on Broadway Avenue in Modesto, Arias stole a 2001 red Ford F-150 pick-up truck. The victim had left the keys in the ignition and got out of the vehicle to talk with some friends. Arias was apprehended a short distance away after he lost control and crashed the pick-up.

Upon entry of the plea, the Honorable Thomas Zeff sentenced Arias to sixteen months in the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. These are Arias's first criminal convictions and first commitments to state prison.

Stanislaus County residents can report suspected vehicle theft activity to their local law enforcement agency or contact the Stanislaus County Auto-Theft Task Force (STANCATT) at: (209) 545-7316.

**IF YOU OBSERVE A THEFT IN PROGRESS, DIAL 911**