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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: April 15, 2016
Re: Benjamin Ballard

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Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Benjamin Ballard, age 56, of Modesto, was found unsuitable for parole at an April 12, 2016 hearing of the State Board of Parole Hearings at the Men's Colony State Prison in San Luis Obispo, CA. Deputy District Attorney Jeff Mangar appeared at the hearing and argued for continued confinement based on the current threat that Mr. Ballard poses to our community. The Board of Parole Hearings agreed and denied Ballard's parole for three years.

In 1985, Ballard was convicted of 2nd degree murder after he killed his girlfriend's 3-year-old daughter, Melissa, because she would not stop crying. Ballard picked up Melissa by the neck with the intent to dunk her head into a toilet in order to make her stop screaming. On the way to the bathroom, he dropped Melissa onto the ground which resulted in Melissa snapping her neck. When Melissa was brought to the hospital, emergency personnel had observed numerous bruises on her head, neck, face, back, shoulders and buttocks. When questioned by detectives, Ballard admitted to beating Melissa over a prolonged period of time because "you can't let them run wild, you have to teach them not to get in trouble." Ballard was sentenced to fifteen years to life.

Ballard had previously been denied parole eight times with the most recent denial in 2013. Since his last parole hearing, Ballard received a serious rule violation for making a racial slur against a Hispanic inmate who Ballard felt disrespected him. Ballard's verbal aggression caused racial tension in his housing facility. The prison psychologist wrote in her "Comprehensive Risk Assessment" report that Ballard poses a moderate risk for violence since he has incurred a disciplinary infraction reflecting ongoing impulsivity and instability within the past two years. "More time and continued counseling is needed," stated prosecutor Jeff Mangar, "to demonstrate Ballard can control his temper in the structured environment of prison before being released back to free society in Modesto."

Mr. Ballard will be scheduled for another hearing in 2019.

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