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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: February 3, 2017
Re: Matthew Deante Morgan

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Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Matthew Deante Morgan, age 24, of Modesto, was convicted on January 25, 2017 of Resisting an Officer by Force after a two-day jury trial. Chief Deputy District Attorney Annette Rees prosecuted the case for the People.

On January 13, 2014, Morgan pled no contest to Rape of an Unconscious Person and was sentenced to 6 years in state prison. Morgan and a juvenile friend had sexually assaulted a girl at a party after someone drugged her drink. Because that crime is considered a serious, but not violent, offense under California law, Morgan was paroled in 2015, just over a year later, after serving only 50% of his sentence. Within a week of being released from prison, he was arrested for removing his GPS monitor, absconding from parole supervision and resisting arrest. He was returned to prison on a parole violation.

On October 22, 2015, Morgan again absconded from parole. The California Department of Corrections Fugitive Apprehension Team responded to a Modesto apartment building where Morgan was suspected of hiding. When agents approached, Morgan attempted to climb out a window and flee. Realizing he had been seen, Morgan climbed back inside and barricaded himself in a back bedroom by moving heavy furniture to block any entry.

The fugitive team breached the door, making a hole large enough for a K9 dog to enter. As the dog's handler, Stockton Police Officer Rodriguez, tried to enter the room Morgan grabbed him by the uniform shirt and continued to resist. During the entry and struggle a heavy piece of furniture fell and fractured Officer Rodriguez's foot. Morgan was arrested for violating parole and felony resisting arrest by force. Morgan was also charged with failing to register as a sex offender, but pled no contest to that count on the first day of jury trial so the jury was not aware of his criminal history.

Following the jury trial, Morgan was convicted by court trial of having been previously convicted of rape, a "strike" under California's "Three Strikes" law that can be used to double his prison sentence in this case, and having served a prior prison term.

Morgan faces a maximum sentence of 8 years and 4 months in state prison. Because of his prior rape conviction, he will have to serve at least 80% of any sentence he receives. Sentencing is currently set for March 16, 2017.

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