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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: May 2, 2017
Re: Michael Earnest Bills
Felony conviction and prison sentence

For More Information Contact:

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Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Michael Earnest Bills, age 59, of Tracy, California, was sentenced to four years and eight months in state prison for vehicle theft, failing to appear in court, and felony driving under the influence. Deputy District Attorney Bianca Yip prosecuted the case on behalf of the People.

On May 21, 2015, Bills stole a Ford F150 pickup truck from a home in El Cajon. The next day, an officer with the Modesto Police Department stopped Bills driving the stolen pickup in downtown Modesto. The officer smelled alcohol and Bills admitted he had been drinking. A chemical test showed Bills's blood alcohol content was 0.21%, over twice the legal limit.

Bills was jailed and posted bail. On June 25, 2015, he failed to appear in court, which constitutes a separate crime. Bills was eventually located in a Nevada correctional facility where he was serving time for a different auto theft and then returned to Stanislaus County.

On April 27, 2017, Bills pled no contest to felony driving under the influence and failing to appear. He also admitted having a prior felony driving under the influence conviction from 2008 and having a felony conviction for negligent discharge of a firearm, a "strike" under California's Three Strikes Law.

Upon entry of the plea, Judge Thomas Zeff sentenced Bills to four years and eight months in state prison.

Deputy District Attorney Bianca Yip prosecuted the case for the People. Her position is funded by a grant provided by the California Office of Traffic Safety through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

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