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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: November 19, 2018
Re: Manuel Cosio Lopez
Convicted killer granted parole

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Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Manuel Cosio Lopez, age 52, was granted parole during a November 15, 2018 hearing held at the Ironwood State Prison in Blythe, California. Deputy District Attorney Aaron Lent traveled to Blythe and appeared at the hearing on behalf of the People.

On December 11, 1993, victim Jesse Robles, age 20, and some friends met Lopez outside of a market in Modesto where they asked him to buy beer for them. After the purchase, they all met down the street where money and beer were exchanged. After an argument started, Lopez drove away but then turned around and came back. Lopez then shot and killed the victim before fleeing the scene.

On August 2, 1994, Lopez was convicted by a Stanislaus County Jury of second degree murder and sentenced to serve 17 years to life in state prison.

At the November 15th hearing, prosecutor Lent argued against Lopez's release on parole reminding the Board that as recently as last year an independent forensic psychologist had assessed Lopez and concluded he still posed a moderate risk for violence to the community. This same finding was made in two previous Comprehensive Risk Assessments completed in 2009 and 2014. Lent also argued that Lopez's refusal to take advantage of prison mental health services and programs showed his unwillingness to address his antisocial personality disorder thereby making him an unreasonable threat to public safety if released.

At the conclusion of the hearing, the Parole Board commissioners rejected all three previous psychologists' assessments in finding Lopez suitable for parole. In their decision, the Commissioners recognized his prior criminality and unstable social history but felt that the risk was outweighed by his recent 6-7 year period of stability while incarcerated in the structured setting of a state prison. The commissioners opined that Lopez showed adequate signs of remorse, significant emotional maturity and that although his insight into why he committed the murder was not perfect and questions still remained regarding the reasons why he shot and killed the victim, release on parole was nonetheless appropriate.

This was Lopez's sixth parole hearing. He was previously denied three times and twice waived his right to a hearing.

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