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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: February 27, 2020
Re: Abel Rodriguez, Jr.
Murder sentencing

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Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that that Abel Rodriguez, Jr., age 37, of Ceres, has been sentenced to serve 153 years to life in state prison after previously being convicted at jury trial last March 28, 2019 of first-degree murder and two counts of attempted murder with firearm and gang enhancements. Chief Deputy District Attorney Jeff Mangar prosecuted the case for the People.

On July 4, 2009 at approximately 9:50 p.m., Rodriguez and his Norteno gangmember friends decided to shoot up a rival Sureno gang's house. He drove his friends to west Modesto and found an innocent family having an Independence Day barbeque in their front yard. Wrongly believing this family to be his gang rivals, Rodriguez used a Glock handgun that was illegally modified to fire fully automatic and sprayed the front yard with gunfire hitting three people, killing one and seriously injuring the other two.

Law enforcement responding to the shooting located Rodriguez's car and attempted to stop him. He led them on a high-speed pursuit down Highway 99 until he crashed at the West Main Street exit in Turlock and was taken into custody. Trial was delayed by the death of one defense attorney and the retirement of another. A Stanislaus County jury finally convicted Rodriguez in March 2019 on all counts.

Since the trial, Rodriguez has delayed sentencing by filing various motions to overturn the conviction, all of which were denied. This week, Judge Nancy Leo followed Chief Deputy District Attorney Jeff Mangar's request and sentenced Rodriguez to serve 75 years to life in state prison for killing the one victim and 39 years to life for each of the other two victims who were seriously injured for a total prison term of 153 years to life. The sentence was increased due to a prior strike conviction in 2009 for assault with a firearm.

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