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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: June 17, 2021
Re: Robert Allen Dekelaita
"Three Strikes" Inmate Paroled

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Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Robert Allen Dekelaita, age 61, was found suitable for parole during a June 8, 2021 hearing of the State Board of Parole Hearings held at the California Health Care Facility in Stockton. Deputy District Attorney Jonathan Lee appeared at the hearing on behalf of the People.

On April 24, 2002, Turlock police responded to a burglary in progress at an apartment complex on Clifford Avenue. Officers saw Dekelaita leaving the scene and arrested him after a brief foot pursuit. Dekelaita was identified by witnesses who saw him leaving the scene. Police found that the apartment door had been forcibly kicked in and the interior ransacked. The victim returned home and identified property found in Dekelaita's possession as having been stolen.

Prior to this crime, Dekelaita was a career criminal with numerous convictions over 20 years including convictions for residential burglary, commercial burglary, grand theft, forgery, resisting arrest, receiving stolen property and drug possession. He routinely violated probation and parole.

On July 11, 2002, a Stanislaus County Superior Court jury convicted Dekelaita of residential burglary. A court trial before Judge Roger Beauchesne found that Dekelaita had been convicted of two prior serious or violent felonies that qualified under California's "Three Strikes" law as well as having served five prior prison terms.

At a sentencing hearing on September 5, 2002, Judge Beauchesne denied a defense request to strike the prior convictions, noting that Dekelaita had not been free of jail or prison custody for longer than a year and a half since 1985. He then ordered Dekelaita to serve a total of 38 years to life in state prison. An appellate court upheld the conviction and sentence in 2003.

Over the last 18 years while in prison custody, Dekelaita repeatedly violated prison rules including theft of state property, use of a controlled substance, mutual fighting, disobeying orders and possession of other contraband. His most recent violation occurred in 2016.

Dekelaita became eligible for “elderly parole” consideration this year due to his age and physical disabilities. A comprehensive risk assessment by a prison psychologist gave the opinion that Dekelaita represented a low risk for future violence if released into the community based on these factors.

At the hearing, prosecutor Lee argued against Dekelaita’s release based upon his repeated rule violations during incarceration, the relative recency of his institutional programming and his lack of solid parole plans.

At the conclusion of the hearing, the Board found Dekelaita no longer posed an unreasonable risk to public safety and was suitable for parole. The Board based their decision on Dekelaita’s age, his age-related physical disabilities, the prison psychologist’s evaluation that he posed a low risk of future violence and that he had no serious rule violations in the last five years.

This was Dekelaita’s first and only parole hearing. He has been in prison for approximately 19 years.

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