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**NEWS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release

Date: February 18, 2004

Re: Jury Conviction of Richard Mejia

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MODESTO, CALIFORNIA – Stanislaus County District Attorney James Brazelton announced that Richard Mejia, age 39, of Boulder City, Nevada, was convicted of Child Concealment, a violation of Penal Code section 278, on February 12, 2004, after a jury trial. Deputy District Attorney Beth O'Hara Johnson prosecuted the case for the People.

On January 2, 2003, Richard Mejia abducted his three year old child from her Modesto day care facility in violation of a valid court order. The child was missing for eighteen days. Investigators from the Child Abduction Unit learned through many leads that Mejia and the child were in Texas.

Following a path of evidence left behind by Mejia, Investigator Bill Andrews and the child's mother, flew to Texas to find her. Upon arrival they learned that Richard was "on the run" with the child. While en route back to the San Francisco Airport, without the child, Andrews was informed that the Sonoma County Sheriff's Department had Mejia in custody.

Sonoma County Sheriff's Deputy, Loren Ferreira, found Mejia and the child in a vehicle, sleeping, at 5:30am on January 20, 2003, eighteen days after her abduction. Mejia faces a maximum sentence of 3 years in state prison.

At no time during the 18 day long abduction did Richard Mejia contact law enforcement nor Lori, the child's mother.

The child is now in the custody of her mother and Richard Mejia was remanded to the custody of the Sheriff's Department. Richard is facing a maximum state prison

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