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PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Contact: ADA Carol Shipley

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Re: Gang member De Anda sentenced to life term Phone: 525-5550

Modesto, California – Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that the Honorable Nancy Ashley sentenced gang member Victor De Anda to two consecutive 25 to life terms as a result of his two separate convictions for drug possession.

On October 6, 2005, while on felony probation for failing to register as a sex offender, De Anda was arrested for three separate felony drug possession violations. After his release from custody on those charges, he was arrested nine days later on a new drug possession charge. De Anda was convicted by jury and court trial of those charges and also for five prior "strike" convictions under the Three Strikes law, including several first degree burglaries and assault with intent to commit rape.

De Anda's defense attorneys contended during a lengthy sentencing hearing that his strikes should be dismissed since he was a heroin addict and not responsible for his actions. Judge Ashley disagreed and denied the defense's requests for leniency, noting that De Anda had a thirty-year criminal record, had been in and out of jail and prison all of his life, and that his crimes were more than just simple drug possession offenses.

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