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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: March 4, 2009
Re: People v. Jerry Benge - Eleven years for
voluntary manslaughter.

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Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Jerry Benge, age 49, of Turlock, was sentenced by Judge Scott Steffen on February 27, 2009 to a term of 11 years in state prison following his November 20, 2008 conviction by jury of voluntary manslaughter. His nephew, Sean Benge, was convicted by a jury of first degree murder with the special circumstance of lying in wait and the special allegation of personally using a firearm causing great bodily injury or death. Deputy District Attorney Carolyn Matzger prosecuted the case for the People.

As Judge Steffen noted during the sentencing, Jerry Benge set in motion the actions that resulted in the death of Steven Brown. Jerry Benge had been having an affair with Steven Brown's wife, Katherine Brown. Jerry Benge was very involved in the lives of the Brown children as well. Jerry Benge told his nephew Sean Benge that he wished Steven Brown was out of the picture. He told him that he wanted him to "whoop Steven's ass." On January 4, 2005, Sean Benge rode a stolen motorcycle over to Steven Brown's house in Ceres, parked it at the vacant house next to Steven's house, and walked over to Steven's house. He entered Steven's house through an unlocked sliding glass door and waited for him to come home. He was carrying a shotgun that Jerry had sold him, which was now sawed-off. When Steven Brown came home through the sliding glass door, Sean Benge shot him three times, killing him. Sean Benge ran out of the house, and minutes later, two of Steven Brown's children arrived home from school and found their father lying on the floor.

Four members of Steven Brown's family spoke at the sentencing and many more submitted letters to the Court. Megan Brown, Steven Brown's then-12 year old daughter, described how she has had many sleepless nights because she has the picture of her father on the floor in her head. She also tries to remember all of the good times she had with her dad. She asked the Court to give Jerry Benge the maximum punishment in state prison.

Steven Benge has a sentencing hearing scheduled for March 13, 2009. The law provides that Sean Benge's sentence is 25 years to Life without the possibility of parole with an additional term of 25 years to Life.

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