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PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Contact: Carol Shipley

Date: September 9, 2009

Assistant District Attorney

Re: Pedro Miguel Hernandez Jr  
Auto Thief Sentenced to 4 Years Prison

Phone: (209) 525-5550

Modesto, California – Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Pedro Miguel Hernandez Jr, age 27, of Modesto, was convicted of auto theft, auto burglary, and possession of a stolen vehicle. Hernandez also admitted a prior auto theft conviction from August 2005. Deputy District Attorney Jeff Mangar prosecuted the case for the People.

The case arose out of events that occurred over three dates: On May 20, 2009 at approximately 2:00 a.m., the owner of a 1998 Honda Accord asked her friend, Hernandez, to drive her to Memorial Medical Center for an emergency. The victim was in intense pain due to having kidney stones. After dropping her off, Hernandez drove off in the victim's car. Hernandez then stole the vehicle's title and registered the vehicle in his name. Hernandez then sold the car. After being released from the hospital several days later and unable to locate her car, the victim reported it as stolen.

On June 9, 2009 at approximately 2 a.m. in the area of Tully Road and Del Monte Avenue in Modesto, Hernandez was observed walking with two other people wearing black sweatshirts, black jeans, and black gloves. A Modesto police officer contacted Hernandez and discovered that he was on probation. A search of Hernandez's black backpack revealed screwdrivers, shaved keys, flashlights and a vehicle registration that was recently stolen from a locked car nearby. Hernandez claimed he was carrying his friend's backpack and did not know what it contained.

On August 19, 2009 at approximately 10:30 p.m. in the area of W. Rumble and McHenry Avenue in Modesto, a Modesto police officer observed a 1993 faded gray Honda Accord that had been reported stolen from the Modesto Junior College on August 18, 2009. Hernandez was one of three passengers and seated in the rear seat. Hernandez claimed the driver just picked him up for a ride. The officer observed visible damage to the vehicle ignition.

Upon entry of the plea, the Honorable Nancy Ashley sentenced Hernandez to four years in prison.

Stanislaus County residents can report suspected vehicle theft activity to their local law enforcement agency or contact the Stanislaus County Auto-Theft Task Force (STANCATT) at: (209) 545-7316.

**IF YOU OBSERVE A THEFT IN PROGRESS, DIAL 911**

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