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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: February 14, 2012
Re: Rene Mendosa PC 192(a) Conviction

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Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Rene Mendosa, age 37, a citizen of Mexico, was convicted on February 9, 2012 of Voluntary Manslaughter for a killing that occurred almost 14 years ago. Deputy District Attorney Brad Nix prosecuted the case for the People.

Shortly after midnight on June 2, 1998, 19-year-old Alma Peralta and three male friends, one a 16-year-old, went to the home of Jose Villa in Turlock. They knew he was out and that his girlfriend was home. Villa was Ms. Peralta's drug dealer.

Once there, Ms. Peralta and her friends strong-armed Villa's girlfriend and stole some of Villa's cocaine. Ms. Peralta and her friends then drove to a residence on Angelus Street where they used the cocaine. Around 3:00 a.m. that morning, Villa and Rene Mendosa came to the front door of the Angelus Street house. Mendosa was armed with a shotgun. Villa had a pistol in his waistband. Mr. Villa came inside and began arguing with Ms. Peralta. The resident asked the individuals to leave his home. Ms. Peralta, the 16-year-old juvenile and Mr. Villa went outside.

The two sides began arguing and both Villa and Mendosa demanded the drugs back. Mendosa threatened Ms. Peralta. Immediately thereafter, Mendosa fired 4 shots from the shotgun. Ms. Peralta was hit three times and died at the scene. The 16-year-old was shot in the back and arm and survived.

Mendosa and Villa fled the state. Mendosa was arrested on June 2, 2010 when he attempted to enter Texas from Mexico. A warrant remains out for Villa's arrest.

Upon entry of a no contest plea, the Honorable Ricardo Cordova heard from five family members and friends before sentencing. Judge Cordova sentenced Mendosa to the aggravated term of 11 years in state prison.

It is very difficult to prosecute a case after more than a decade has passed. The Stanislaus County District Attorney wishes to acknowledge and thank Turlock Police Department

Detectives Baca, Olson, and Heckathorn among many others for their work in 1998, TPD Detectives Tosta and Navaro for their work in 2010 and 2011, and DA Investigator Chris Dickinson for his work in putting the case together.