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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Re: Three Murderers Granted Parole

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Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that three men previously convicted of murder charges were all found suitable for parole by three different panels of the State Board of Parole Hearings within a span of three days. **John O. Adams** of Modesto was found suitable for parole at a June 10, 2014 hearing of the State Board of Parole Hearings at Solano State Prison in Vacaville. **Fernando Arreola**, age 43, of Turlock was found suitable for parole at a June 12, 2014 hearing of the State Board of Parole Hearings in Tehachapi. **Billy Gene Allen** of Richmond was found suitable for parole at a June 12, 2014 hearing of the State Board of Parole Hearings at San Quentin State Prison.

In March of 1980, **Adams** was released on parole for robbery. Adams admitted at the parole hearing that shortly after his release, he began carrying a sawed off shotgun around with him. On June 8, 1980 at about 7:30 p.m., Adams was out with his partner Michael Blanusa to look for one of six men who had purportedly beaten up a mutual friend. Having heard where the fourth man could be found, he and Blanusa drove past the Richland Shopping Center in Ceres, at which time Adams thought that he had been flipped off by a bystander, Miller. Adams got out of the car and punched Miller. Miller pinned Adams to the ground. Blanusa ordered Miller to release Adams. Shortly after being released by Miller, Adams again approached and punched Miller, who once again held Adams to the ground and this time pinned both of his arms. Blanusa took his shotgun from the car and again ordered Miller to release Adams. This time, upon being released, Adams went back to his car and got his sawed off shotgun. After retrieving the shotgun, a car drove up and Adams ran up to the car and pointed the sawed off shotgun thru the car's window at the driver's face and threatened to shoot the driver. As this occurred, victim James Goff, intervening for Miller, ran up to Adams and yelled "shoot me, if you want to shoot someone; you ain't got the guts." Adams fired his shotgun at Goff killing him. Goff had a knife in his hand but, according to witnesses, never attempted to use it. Following the shooting, Adams and Blanusa drove off. Adams was later arrested in Ventura County. Adams was convicted by a jury of Murder in the first degree with use of a gun, possession of a deadly weapon, and assault with a firearm as well as having prior convictions for robbery and burglary. On December 31, 1980, Adams was sentenced to 28 years to life by the Honorable Frank Pierson.

At the parole hearing for Adams, Deputy District Attorney Brad Nix argued against parole based on the extreme violence of the crime, Adam's then ongoing pattern of violence, and his diagnosed anti-social personality disorder and alcohol abuse disorder for which Adams had not received any psychiatric treatment.

Adams claimed at his parole hearing to having been free of any misbehavior while in prison for 31 of the 33 years he has been imprisoned and to having completed several classes and to his having being trained in prison as an optician. Adams claimed that his problems stemmed from his bad associations as a youth with people who urged him to use violence and his drinking and that he would not drink or use drugs if released. The Board of Parole Hearings panel members approved his release on parole.

On January 19, 1995, **Arreola** was convicted by a jury of second degree murder for the 1993 killing of a nine-month-old baby. Arreola was sentenced by the Honorable Charles Stone to 15 years to life on March 3, 1995. Although Arreola denied responsibility for the baby's death at trial, on appeal and twice at previous parole eligibility hearings, he eventually admitted at a parole eligibility hearing in 2012 that he had in fact killed the baby. At his most recent parole eligibility hearing, Arreola admitted that during the five months that he lived with the baby he had abused him at least thirty times prior to the attack which caused the baby's death.

At the parole hearing for Arreola, Deputy District Attorney Sandra Bishop argued for continued confinement based on the cruel and callous nature of the offense, the extreme vulnerability of the helpless baby, the prison psychiatric assessment that Arreola presented a moderate risk for future violence and Arreola's lack of insight into his crime and lack of remorse for the consequences of his actions.

Presiding Board of Prison Terms Commissioner Zarrinnan described the crime as heinous, vicious and brutal and 'quite disturbing and troublesome' but found, nevertheless, that the inmate had verbalized requisite insight into his crime. In reaching their conclusion that Arreola was eligible for release, the hearing panel discounted the most recent 2012 psychiatric report which determined Arreola to be a moderate risk of future violence based on progress shown by Arreola since that report. The hearing panel noted that Arreola was 23 years old when he murdered the baby and had no prior criminal record of assault. They also observed that Arreola had not been in trouble in prison since 2007, had been receiving positive work performance evaluations and had participated in numerous self-help prison groups. The hearing panel imposed conditions on Arreola's parole that he have no contact with the victim's next of kin and that he not be left alone with any child under the age of eighteen.

Allen was convicted on April 10, 1991 of the premeditated murder of Johnny Whittaker and assault with a deadly weapon on Dan Ensley and Ronald Alexander at Prescott Estates in Modesto which occurred on September 12, 1989. Allen's co-defendant Damon Rivas lured the three victims outside of Whittaker's girlfriend's apartment (Allen's former girlfriend) at which time Allen, standing by his car, shot victim Whittaker twice in the chest, killing him. The other two victims, Ensley and Alexander, were injured by the pellets from the two shotgun blasts. Allen was sentenced to 27 years to life in state prison. He had previously been denied parole in 2007 and 2011.

At Allen's hearing, Deputy District Attorney Jeff Laugero argued for further confinement based on the atrocious and cruel nature of the crime, the fact that there were multiple victims and Allen's attempt to shift blame for the crime to the victim all the way until January 13, 2014 when he finally admitted his responsibility for the crime during an assessment in preparation for this parole hearing.

The two-member panel of the Parole Board justified Allen's suitability for parole similarly to Commissioner Zarrinnan's reasoning in Arreola's parole hearing. They also ignored the severity of the crime and discounted Allen's lack of remorse for the better part of the last 24 years.

The three grants of parole now go to the Governor's office for review. The Governor has 120 to 150 days to decide whether or not to grant parole.