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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: September 28, 2022
Re: Arthur Ray Jones
Three Strike Inmate Denied Parole

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Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Arthur Ray Jones, age 75, of Modesto was found unsuitable for parole during a September 12, 2022 hearing of the State Board of Parole Hearings held at San Quentin State Prison. Deputy District Attorney Victoria Vasquez appeared on behalf of the People.

On October 24, 2005, Jones was stopped by the California Highway Patrol for not wearing a seatbelt and weaving. When contacted, Jones had a hypodermic syringe visible on his right leg and showed obvious signs of being under the influence. After failing a series of field sobriety tests, he was arrested and transported to the Stanislaus County jail. During a pre-booking search, Jones removed his socks and shoes which dislodged a small baggie of drugs. When asked by the officer, "What's this?" Jones replied, "looks like heroin."

Jones was charged with felony possession of heroin and driving under the influence of drugs. He was also charged with having previously been convicted of various forcible sex crimes that occurred while he was incarcerated in 1969 in the Fresno County jail. In that case, Jones and two co-defendants beat two fellow inmates in a hazing ritual where they required the victims to dance the "boogaloo." For his part, Jones assisted in physically restraining the victims and forced them to orally copulate himself and other inmates on multiple occasions. One of the victims was also sodomized by Jones and his fellow codefendants. Those 1969 convictions counted as "strikes" under California's "Three Strikes Law" making his new offense eligible for a life sentence. Although Proposition 47 reduced most drug possession offenses to misdemeanors, Jones's prior conviction for sex offenses exclude him from the new law.

At trial, Jones voluntarily waived his right to a jury allowing Judge Hurl W. Johnson to hear his case and decide his guilt. At the conclusion of the evidence, Jones was convicted of both offenses and his 1969 "strike" priors were found to be true. At sentencing, the judge ordered Jones to serve a term of 25 years to life in state prison. A 2007 appellate court upheld the convictions and found that Jones's "extensive criminal record and recidivism" supported his life sentence. Jones prior criminal history stretched as far back as 1969 and included numerous theft and drug possession

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offenses, including possessing drugs in a jail or prison, driving under the influence, assault with a deadly weapon, and serving multiple prison terms with repeated parole violations.

At the parole hearing on September 12th, a prison psychologist who examined Jones believed that he posed a “low” risk for future violence if he were to be released into the community. One of the Parole Board Commissioners remarked that it seemed Jones had committed almost every type of crime possible. For his part, Jones stated, “I didn’t kill nobody.”

Following deliberations, the Board denied parole for only three years due to Jones’s advanced age. The Board found as an aggravating factor Jones’s demonstrated lack of self-control over a span of forty years with his last offense occurring when he was 58 years old. The Board also expressed concern over Jones’s minimal participation in attending programs designed to assist him in his rehabilitation and recovery from addiction and his violation of prison rules as recently as May of 2022.

This was Jones’s first parole hearing. Jones is eligible under “Elder Parole” rules to have his next hearing advanced sooner than three years should a change in circumstances support that.

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