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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: May 1, 2023
Re: Andrew Jason Gonzalez
Serial Armed Robber Granted Parole

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Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Jeff Laugero announced today that Andrew Jason Gonzalez, age 38, of Merced was found suitable for parole during a February 17, 2023, hearing of the State Board of Parole Hearings held at Pleasant Valley State Prison in Coalinga. Deputy District Attorney Holly MacKinnon appeared at the hearing on behalf of the People.

Between June and October of 2008, Gonzalez committed over 27 armed robberies in Stanislaus and neighboring counties. Gonzalez was charged by complaint in Stanislaus County for eight of those armed robberies that occurred in Turlock, Modesto and Ceres. Gonzalez entered various businesses, pulled a gun on the employees and demanded money. His actions terrified the employees of these establishments and the business community as a whole.

On September 3, 2010, Gonzalez pled no contest to eight counts of robbery and admitted personally using a firearm in each crime. Judge Timothy Salter sentenced Gonzalez to serve 28 years in state prison.

Since going to prison, Gonzalez has regularly violated prison rules including refusing to work, disobeying orders, and testing positive for controlled substances. In 2017, Gonzales and another inmate attacked a fellow inmate and gang member, stabbing the victim multiple times. At the parole hearing, Gonzalez accepted responsibility for his crimes, expressed remorse for what he did and discussed the extensive programming he has engaged in over the last 14 years to address his criminality.

Deputy District Attorney MacKinnon argued to the Board of Parole Hearings that Gonzalez should not be released, that he needed further substance abuse and gang prevention programming and had inadequate parole plans. MacKinnon noted that a recent psychological evaluation of Gonzalez gave the opinion that he continued to pose a moderate (higher moderate) risk of committing future violent acts if released. The psychologist found it concerning that Gonzalez exhibited such a callous disregard for life in committing his life crimes as well as in the violent rules violations he incurred while in prison.

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The Board of Parole hearings disagreed and granted Gonzalez parole. They found that Gonzalez was being honest about his chaotic childhood and his substance abuse issues, and how both related to the causative factors of his life crime. The Board was impressed with the fact that since his brutal attack on another inmate in 2017, Gonzalez had not violated prison rules, dropped out of his prison gang, and stayed sober. Gonzalez was 23 years old at the time he terrorized the community by committing numerous robberies, making him eligible for “Youthful Offender Parole.” The Board gave great weight to the fact that Gonzalez was a “youthful offender,” had developed impulse control and maturity since his conviction and was impressed by Gonzalez’s rehabilitative programming, self-reflection, education and vocational training in prison over the last 14 years. Lastly, the Board found that Gonzalez had adequate parole plans which included transitional housing and family support.

This was Gonzalez’s first parole consideration hearing. The Board’s decision now advances to the Decision Review Unit which has 120 days to review the grant of parole. If the Decision Review Unit approves the decision, Governor Newsom will then have 30 days to refer to the full Board sitting *en banc* or let the grant of parole stand.

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