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PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Date: 7-3-08

Re: John Matthew Ray

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Modesto, California – Stanislaus County District Birgit Fladager announced today that John Mathew Ray, age 41, of Modesto, was sentenced to 127 years to life for molesting a developmentally delayed girl. Deputy District Attorney Annette Rees prosecuted the case for the People.

John Ray, aka ‘Shaggy’, met the current victim, who was then 14 years old, at the A&W in Modesto. He befriended her mother and was eventually allowed to move into the home. He failed to tell the family that he was already a convicted sex offender who had served 17 years in prison for sexually assaulting another young girl in Woodland. The 14-year-old victim is developmentally delayed and was particularly vulnerable to Ray’s manipulation of her naivety.

“He told her that she needed to learn this from him, that she would need to know it, and her boyfriends wouldn’t teach her,” said Rees. “Here is a young girl who is particularly vulnerable to someone, particularly of the opposite sex, a trusted individual living in her home; she was completely manipulated by him.” Rees, who prosecutes sexual assault cases, said “it’s always about access and vulnerability for these offenders. They know how to choose a victim.”

The former victim from 1992 also testified at the trial. She was just 13 years old herself when assaulted. Even with the passage of 15 years, she told the jury she was still affected, “very much so.” Ray was convicted of Digital Penetration, Oral Copulation, Unlawful Sexual Intercourse, Lewd and Lascivious Acts, and Failure to Register as a Sex Offender. Although Ray was current with his registration with the Modesto Police Department, he was registering as a ‘Transient’ and willfully failed to disclose the victim’s address where he was actually living.

The Defendant’s motion to strike his strikes was denied, and he was sentenced to 25 years-to-life for each of the five felonies, plus an additional 2 years for two prior prison terms he had served. The Honorable Donald Shaver had the discretion to run each of the sentences concurrent, but he agreed with the prosecutor that each act was separate, occurred on separate dates, and nothing about the defendant’s 20-year criminal history, nor the facts of his latest crime, gave him any reason to reduce the sentence.

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