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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: April 3, 2013
Re: Jeffrey Maria

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Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Jeffrey Maria, of Turlock, was found unsuitable for parole at a March 26, 2013 hearing of the State Board of Parole Hearings in Vacaville at the California Medical Facility. Deputy District Attorney Beth O'Hara Owen appeared at the hearing and argued for continued confinement based on the gravity of the offense, serious misconduct while in custody and additional self-help needs. This was Maria's first parole hearing.

On June 25, 1979, Maria (age 17 at the time), along with 3 crime partners, planned a home invasion of Philip and Kathryn Ranzo's Modesto home. After planning the robbery while in a parked car outside of the house, the four knocked on the Ranzos' door under the guise of being out of gas and asked to use the telephone. The Ranzos were then tied up, beaten, stabbed and murdered. Kathryn Ranzo was also raped before being bludgeoned and stabbed to death. The four then left with cash and jewelry. The Ranzos' death orphaned their only child, Mark, age 10, who had been staying at his grandmother's house that night.

Jeffrey Maria was convicted on June 6, 1980 of two counts of 1st degree murder, two counts of robbery, residential burglary and use of a knife during the commission of the crimes. He was sentenced to life without parole as a 17-year-old. After an appeal, the court resentenced him to 52 years to life. He has served 33 years in prison.

In 2006, Jeffrey Maria was also convicted of attempted escape from Solano Prison and was sentenced to 16 months in prison to be served concurrently.

Phillip's sister, Sandy Ranzo-Howell, testified and argued for the maximum possible period of denial which is 12 years. She stated that her family was "robbed of a father, mother, aunt, uncle, brother, sister and son." Mrs. Ranzo-Howell stated her brother was a "good Samaritan and he would have given them money for gas if asked." Ranzo-Howell added "the bat which was used to kill the Ranzos belonged to Mark, the Ranzos' son. Mr. Ranzo, Mark and Mike Naranjo had played baseball earlier that day with that same bat." She added that that "the Ranzos were never able to celebrate the joys of their son's life which included two grand-daughters."

Deputy District Attorney Owen argued to the Board that continued confinement was necessary to keep the public safe. The Board of Parole Hearings agreed and denied parole for 5 years.

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