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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: July 1, 2019
Re: Michael Christopher Suarez
2nd Degree Murder Conviction

For More Information Contact:

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Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Michael Christopher Suarez, age 27, of Modesto, was convicted of second degree murder along with an enhancement for using a deadly weapon (knife). Deputy District Attorney Barry Shapiro prosecuted the case for the People.

On April 9, 2017, Michael Suarez stabbed parolee Steven Monkhouse thirty-two times and left the body in the victim's car at Legion Park. Suarez believed Monkhouse had raped Suarez's wife several years earlier and told his wife that he was going to "take care" of the victim. Police investigation uncovered evidence that Suarez was at Legion Park around the time of the killing. He was arrested and charged with murder along with an enhancement for use of a knife. Jury trial was set to begin on July 9, 2019. On June 27, before Superior Court Judge Ricardo Cordova, Suarez pled no contest to second degree murder along with the knife enhancement. He also waived his right to appeal any errors in his case and waived two years, two months and nine days of custody credits up to this date. In return for the plea, the parties stipulated that Suarez would serve a term of sixteen years to life in state prison.

Suarez returns to court on August 16, 2019, for sentencing and victim impact statements. This crime counts as a "Strike" under California's "Three Strikes" law and may be used to double the punishment if Suarez is convicted of any future felony crimes.

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