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PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Date: March 6, 2007

Re: Benjamin Ballard

Contact: John J. Goold

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Modesto, California – Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Benjamin Ballard, 48, was found unsuitable for parole at a hearing held by the State Board of Prison Terms at San Quentin prison on February 23, 2007.

Ballard was convicted of second degree murder for killing 3-year-old Melissa Ebarb on October 3, 1984. About a month after moving in with the baby's mother, Ballard repeatedly struck the child, breaking her neck. During the parole hearing, Ballard acknowledged physically abusing two other children in that same household and cited heroin addiction and a difficult childhood as part of the causes of his behavior.

Deputy District Attorney John R. Mayne appeared at the hearing and argued against parole based on the continuing risk Ballard posed to society and the callousness of the crime. The Board of Prison Terms agreed and denied parole for another three years.

Ballard was initially sentenced to 15 years to life, but under the rules in place at the time, his initial parole hearing was held in 1992. He will receive another parole hearing in 2010.

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