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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: December 17, 2008
Re: People v. Russell – Nineteen years in
State Prison for Assaulting a Peace Officer

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Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Baylen Russell, age 21, of Riverbank, was convicted of assaulting a peace officer with a semi-automatic firearm. Russell further admitted enhancements for personally using a firearm and being out on bail in another case at the time of the offense. Deputy District Attorney Nate Baker prosecuted the case.

The case arose out of events which occurred on July 23, 2007 near the intersection of Orangeburg and Nelson Avenue in the city of Modesto. According to testimony at the preliminary hearing, Sergeant Ray Coyle of the Modesto Police Department was responding to a family disturbance call and saw the defendant, who matched the suspect description, walking away from the area. Sgt. Coyle, dressed in full police uniform, approached the defendant on foot. Russell charged at the officer swinging his fists and hit Sgt. Coyle several times in the head and face. Sgt. Coyle took Russell to the ground and a struggle began over Sgt. Coyle's duty gun. Russell grabbed the handle and tore the gun free from the holster. Three citizens came to Sgt. Coyle's aid and helped subdue Russell. Sgt. Coyle twisted his knee and received several scrapes on his arms as a result of the incident.

Upon entry of the plea, the Honorable Judge Marie Sovey Silveira sentenced Russell to 19 years in state prison. In addition, Russell was also convicted by plea of a felony assault upon his mother that had occurred 2 days prior. He was sentenced in that case to a concurrent sentence of 2 years in state prison.

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