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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: August 22, 2016
Re: Steven Eugene Rice

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Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Steven Eugene Rice, age 45 of Oakdale, was found unsuitable for parole August 18th after a hearing of the State Board of Parole Hearings held at the state prison in Susanville.

In 1993, the 22-year-old Rice kidnaped a woman outside an Oakdale Taco Bell restaurant, forcing her into her car and driving her away. The victim escaped by jumping out of the moving vehicle. Several weeks later, Rice kidnaped a second victim outside an Oakdale Post Office, forcing her into her own vehicle, threatening her with a meat cleaver and physical harm. She also jumped from the moving car to get away. Two weeks later, Rice attacked another woman at an Oakdale laundromat, forcing that victim into a bathroom and threatening her with a knife. The victim fought back and was able to forcibly eject Rice from the business and lock the door. Police arrested Rice after he was identified by each victim during photographic lineups.

On March 29th, 1994, a Stanislaus County Superior Court jury convicted Rice of multiple felony crimes including aggravated kidnapping for the purpose of rape and robbery, kidnapping, robbery, assault with intent to commit rape, sexual battery, false imprisonment, burglary and several enhancements for using a weapon. He was sentenced to two consecutive life terms in state prison plus 9 years.

This was Rice's first parole hearing, made possible by recent changes in California law that allow early release on parole if a prison inmate is designated a "youthful offender" who committed his life crimes prior to the age of 23.

Deputy District Attorney Blythe Harris appeared at the hearing and argued for Rice's continued confinement based on the outrageousness of his criminal acts against three women, his prison disciplinary record, and his previous criminal history which included a Missouri sexual assault conviction when he was 19 years old.

The Board of Parole Hearings agreed and denied parole for 5 years. Unfortunately, as a newly designated "youthful offender," after only one year Rice may petition the Board to advance his next hearing to an earlier date.

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