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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: October 6, 2021
Re: Manuel Holguin Barcello
Parole Denied

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Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Manuel Holguin Barcello, age 60, of Sonora, Mexico was found unsuitable for parole during a September 30, 2021 hearing of the State Board of Parole Hearings held at Solano State Prison. Deputy District Attorney Sara Sousa appeared at the hearing on behalf of the People.

On May 5, 1983, Barcello and Rodrigo Orozco went to a Riverbank home to commit a robbery. Once there, they hog-tied the 78-year-old victim's feet and hands behind his back and gagged his mouth, breaking several of his ribs in the process. The gag blocked the elderly man's airway and he suffocated to death. His family called law enforcement after they were unable to contact him. Investigators responded and found the victim's body. The home appeared to have been ransacked and several firearms were missing and money from the victim's wallet.

Sheriff's detectives first arrested Barcello's crime partner, Orozco, for the murder. Orozco admitted that he and Barcello had gone to the victim's house to rob him of what they believed was a substantial amount of cash. On October 21, 1983, Orozco was convicted of murder and sentenced to serve 25-years-to-life in state prison.

Barcello was later deported to Mexico after being arrested for a burglary in Merced County but later returned to the United States to live with his parents in 1985. When he was arrested for the murder, Barcello told detectives that he intended to rob the victim because he needed money to fuel his heroin addiction.

On March 24, 1986, Barcello was convicted of murder and sentenced to serve 15- years-to-life in state prison. In 2005, Barcello was convicted of possession of a controlled substance for the purpose of sales, resulting in eight years of prison time being added to his sentence. In July of 2021, Barcello admitted using heroin and methamphetamine in prison after he tested positive for those drugs. However, during an interview in August of 2021, Barcello lied to prison officials and said he had been clean and sober since 2009.

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At the parole hearing, prosecutor Sousa argued against Barcello's release. She noted that Barcello's drug addiction had not subsided since being incarcerated, that he was capable of extreme violence when under the influence of heroin and that any potential release from custody posed an unreasonable risk to the safety of society. Sousa requested the Board deny parole for a period of seven years.

The Board agreed but denied parole for only five years. They found that the manner in which the elderly victim was murdered and left for dead was callous and inhumane. The Board also noted that Barcello lacked any form of self-control or discipline and had demonstrated an inability to apply any form of rehabilitative programming to his drug addiction. The Board also noted Barcello had no insight as to the seriousness of the crimes he committed and had not made any of the necessary changes to support being released from prison.

This was Barcello's eighth parole hearing, having most recently been denied parole in October of 2016. He will be scheduled for another hearing in 2026 but may apply for elder parole consideration in only three years. Barcello has spent 38 years in prison.

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