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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: February 24, 2022
Re: James Patrick Brugette
Convicted rapist denied parole

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Modesto, California- Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that James Patrick Brugette, age 53, was found unsuitable for parole during a January 28, 2022 hearing of the State Board of Parole Hearings. Deputy District Attorney Harshan Samra appeared at the hearing and argued on behalf of the Stanislaus County District Attorney's Office.

On November 19, 1995, the victim, age 27, met Brugette and a group of his friends at a bar in Modesto. After the group decided to leave the bar and meet at a home in Modesto, the victim joined them. While the victim was waiting for a cab to arrive and take her home, Brugette enticed her to come outside. He then grabbed her, punched her in the face, brandished a kitchen knife and threatened to kill her if she made any noise. Brugette dragged her to the side of the house, took off her clothes and forced her to orally copulate him and engage in forcible sexual intercourse. After the rape, the victim was allowed to go back into the house. When her cab arrived, she requested to be taken to the hospital where the assault was reported to police. The victim's right eye was swollen, and she had received a cut on the fingers of one hand which required stitches to close. Police responded to the house and arrested Brugette. They also recovered the knife he used to threaten and cut the victim.

Brugette was charged with forcible rape, oral copulation with force along with use of a weapon. On June 7, 1996, a Stanislaus County Superior Court jury convicted Brugette of all charges and enhancements. On November 13, 1996, Judge Hugh Rose III sentenced him to serve 15 years to life on each count, to run consecutively. An appellate court upheld the conviction and sentence.

Brugette has received several disciplinary violations in prison including a 2017 violation for battery against another inmate. A prison psychologist who examined him gave the opinion that Brugette represented a high risk for future violence if he were to be released into the community. The psychologist noted that Brugette had failed to engage in adequate rehabilitative programming, seriously lacked insight into what motivated him to commit the underlying offenses and continued to minimize his culpability. When asked, Brugette blamed his actions on using methamphetamine and told the psychologist he hadn't considered the consequences of his actions at the time, nor the impact of his behavior on the victim, replying, "I was just high."

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At the parole hearing, Prosecutor Samra asked the Board to deny parole, arguing that Brugette had not completed adequate programming in order to address his criminality and still posed an unreasonable risk of danger to the public even 26 years after committing the life offenses.

At the conclusion of deliberations, the Board of Parole Hearings panel denied Brugette parole for a period of only three years.

This was Brugette's first parole hearing.

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