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PRESS RELEASE

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Re: Parole Board hearing for Inmate James Baggett, CDCR #C23759

On June 29, 2017, a Board of Parole Hearing was held at the Substance Abuse Treatment Facility in Corcoran, CA for convicted murderer James Baggett.

On April 10, 1987, James Baggett was an inmate at the California Medical Facility in Vacaville, serving a twenty year prison sentence for a Fresno robbery of an inhabited dwelling with use of a firearm. Edwin Earle was a fellow inmate at the prison.

Edwin owed \$50 to Baggett for a purchase of methamphetamine. Edwin also owed money to members of the Misfits motorcycle gang, who Baggett associated with. Baggett conspired with three of these gang members to attack Edwin. Baggett was offered an “eight-ball” of methamphetamine for agreeing to stab Edwin in accordance with this plan. He agreed and was paid in drugs the evening before the crime.

Baggett lured Edwin to a restroom in the prison with the promise of drugs. One of his co-conspirators acted as a “point” lookout while Baggett went into the restroom with Edwin. While Edwin was sitting on the toilet injecting narcotics, Baggett stabbed him repeatedly with an inmate manufactured weapon.

Autopsy results indicated that Edwin had seven stab wounds in his chest, a stab wound in his left shoulder, and a deep facial laceration stretching from the left side of his forehead to the bottom of his chin. Edwin also suffered two stab wounds to his upper back, one stab wound to the base of his head, and a stab wound to his left elbow. Baggett was seen following the murder in the immediate area of the murder location with blood on his hands. The inmate manufactured weapon was found to be a sharp object, fifteen inches in length, one inch wide, and sharpened to a point.

Baggett pled guilty to second degree murder and was sentenced on September 21, 1988, to a term of fifteen years to life. This term was concurrent to the twenty year sentence he was serving when the offense was committed.

Baggett has had five prior parole board hearings, the last in 2014 resulting in a three year denial of parole. At the present parole board hearing, Deputy District Attorney William Ainsworth strenuously opposed the release of inmate James Baggett, asking the Parole Board to find that Baggett continues to represent an unreasonable risk to public safety if released, and requesting that the denial be for five years until the next parole eligibility. Deputy District Attorney Ainsworth argued that Baggett’s extensive criminal history, the terrible and calculated nature of the crime, his lack of viable parole plans, and the inmate’s insufficient

responses to questions posed during the hearing all demonstrated that Baggett still posed an unreasonable risk to the community if released. Despite this strong opposition, the Parole Board granted parole, stating that the long amount of time passed since the murder reduced the current risk to public safety posed by the inmate. The Parole Board further stated that the inmate's lack of recent rules violations in prison and appearance of genuine remorse at the hearing reflected his rehabilitation while in prison.