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PRESS RELEASE

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Re: Parole Board hearing for Inmate Todd Graham, CDCR #E-01955

On August 8, 2017, a Board of Parole Hearing was held at the Substance Abuse Treatment Facility in Corcoran, CA for convicted murderer Todd Graham.

On May 8, 1988, Todd Graham robbed Audrey Hignight, 84 years old, as she left Farmer's Market at the corner of Pennsylvania and Texas Street in Fairfield. Graham ran up behind Mrs. Hignight and grabbed Mrs. Hignight's purse and pushed her down. According to witnesses, Graham kicked and punched Mrs. Hignight as he was trying to get her purse. He left her lying on the ground, suffering.

Graham fled from the scene, pursued by a man and his son who witnessed the robbery. They pursued Graham down an alley before he was finally caught by another eye witness who was stopped at a red light at the time he witnessed the robbery and then drove his vehicle to cut off Graham in the alley. Graham was detained by these three "Good Samaritans" until the police arrived.

Mrs. Hignight spoke to the police, indicating that Graham pushed her with such force that he could have killed her. She was taken to the hospital, where she was diagnosed with multiple injuries, including a broken hip. During her hospitalization, Mrs. Hignight developed pneumonia, and she died on May 15, 1988. Doctors reported that Mrs. Hignight would not have died had she not been assaulted.

Graham told police at the time that he was the victim of a robbery by the eye witness in the vehicle and that someone stole his two rings and a watch. He was found with the purse and also was in possession of a bank card with \$3,650 on it, not belonging to himself or Mrs. Hignight. He later admitted to the robbery, claiming he stole the purse while under the influence of alcohol and cocaine and that his purpose in stealing it was to get more money to buy alcohol and cocaine.

Graham pled guilty to first degree murder and robbery and was sentenced to a term of 25 years to life on November 9, 1988. Graham has had three prior parole board hearings, the last in 2010 resulting in a seven year denial of parole. He was eligible for special parole consideration under the "elderly parole program" based on his current age, 68, and length of incarceration.

Deputy District Attorney William Ainsworth strongly opposed release of Todd Graham on parole based on the unreasonable risk Graham would pose to public safety if released. Deputy District Attorney Ainsworth argued that the calculated nature of the crime, Graham's lack of substance abuse treatment while incarcerated, and his insufficient responses to questions posed during the hearing all demonstrated that Graham still lacked sufficient insight into the nature and causes of for his crime and lacked sufficient skills to avoid recidivism when released,

thus posing an unreasonable risk to the community if released. Graham requested his release and testified at his parole hearing. Despite this opposition, the Parole Board granted parole, citing Graham's minimal prior criminality, lack of serious misconduct while incarcerated, and his sobriety while incarcerated for 29 years, along with his age diminishing his potential risk to society. The Parole Board found that while Graham posed some risk to public safety, that risk was not unreasonable.