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**PRESS RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release**

Date: 05/30/08  
Re: Lewis Villa, Alejandro Cardenas  
Nicholas Lujan DA#1236420

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**Modesto, California** - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Alejandro Cardenas, age 18, of Modesto, was sentenced to 10 years and 8 months in state prison, Nicholas Lujan, age 18, of Modesto, was sentenced to 10 years and 4 months in state prison, and Lewis Villa, age 18, of Modesto, was sentenced to 5 years and 8 months in state prison after a hearing on May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2008, for their roles in the Carjacking of a Hilmar man at the Turlock City 14 Cinemas last October. Deputy District Attorney Shawn D. Bessey appeared at the hearing and prosecuted the case. The Honorable Timothy Salter accepted the pleas and imposed the prison terms.

The case arose out of events which occurred on October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2007 in the cities of Turlock and Modesto. The defendants, who were known to the Modesto Police Department as active members of the Norteno criminal street gang, drove to Turlock to commit a carjacking. The three individuals along with a juvenile drove to the Turlock City 14 Cinemas and contacted a Hispanic male adult who was sitting in his car outside the movie theatre. Alejandro Cardenas, armed with a .380 caliber handgun, and Nicholas Lujan approached the victim and demanded the keys to the car. Afraid for his life, the victim relinquished control of the car to Cardenas and Lujan who then sped away from the theatre. Lewis Villa and the juvenile followed in Villa's car. Once back in Modesto, all four individuals got into the stolen car with Lujan as the driver. The Modesto Police Department was actively searching for the stolen vehicle and came across it in the area known as the "Airport District". A high speed car chase ensued and the car driven by Lujan crashed. All four suspects ran from the police. Officers from the Modesto Police Department swarmed the area looking for the four individuals who were described as being dressed in red clothing, a color commonly worn by members of the Norteno criminal street gang. The three 18-year-old suspects and the one juvenile suspect were taken into custody through the collaborative efforts of the Turlock and Modesto Police Departments.

**Alejandro Cardenas** pled no contest to carjacking, being armed with a gun and being an active participant in a criminal street gang. He received the aggravated term of 9 years, plus 1 year for the weapon and 8 months for the gang charge, for a total of 10 years, 8 months.

**Nicholas Lujan** pled no contest to carjacking, felony evading of police and being an active participant in a criminal street gang. He received the aggravated term of 9 years and an additional 8 months each for the evading and gang charge for a total of 10 years, 4 months.

**Lewis Villa** pled no contest to carjacking and being an active participant in a criminal street gang and received a mid-term sentence of 5 years for the carjacking and an additional 8 months for the gang charge for a total of 5 years, 8 months.

All three defendants are now three-strikers under California's "Three Strikes" law and they will be required to serve at least 85% of their prison terms in the custody of California Department Corrections and Rehabilitation. Although the defendants are only 18 years of age and have minimal criminal history, the seriousness of the charges warranted the prison sentences imposed.

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