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**CASE OF INTEREST**

March 3, 2008

CASE: People v. Craig Danny Gonzales  
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District Attorney Jan Scully announced today that Craig Danny Gonzales was sentenced by Superior Court Judge Hon. Lloyd Connelly to 19 years 8 months state prison following his conviction of identity theft and drug crimes committed in 2003, 2005 and 2006. Judge Connelly noted this was the longest sentence he had ever imposed for crimes of this type, but described Gonzales' record as "numbing," saying "...this conduct, repetitive conduct ignoring the law and the consequences to people, ... in the face of multiple sanctions ... is so frustrating to the community."

Gonzales was placed probation on July 23, 2003 for identity theft offenses. On August 26, 2003 he was caught on surveillance cameras at Lowe's in Elk Grove, purchasing merchandise with a counterfeit check and a counterfeit driver's license. He was arrested September 9, 2003 by Sacramento Sheriff's deputies as he arrived at a residence where they were conducting a narcotics investigation. The van he arrived in had property Gonzales had purchased using a counterfeit license and check. Officers seized counterfeit checks, counterfeit driver licenses, counterfeit \$100 and \$50 bills, and methamphetamine.

Gonzales was released on bail in 2004. Within two months, he was re-arrested on new charges of conspiracy to manufacture counterfeit checks and receiving stolen property, and his state parole was violated. After serving his parole violation, he was released on bail in 2005, but was arrested on November 1, 2005 for failures to appear in court and transportation of methamphetamine. On December 15, 2005, while incarcerated at Sacramento County Jail, Gonzales enlisted the help of persons on the outside to set up fraudulent telephone accounts using personal information of UCD Medical Center cancer patients. He made over 1000 fraudulent collect calls from the county jail. One of his victims, cancer patient Ellen Mettler, discovered the fraudulent charges when AT&T sent her a \$1300 phone bill. The billing address for the fraud account was an apartment complex where Mr. Gonzales' girlfriend lived. Ms. Mettler assisted in the investigation and prosecution of the case until she passed away from cancer in the summer of 2007.

Gonzales' criminal career includes a 1990 federal bank robbery conviction, and two Sacramento convictions with prison sentences. According to Supervising Deputy D.A. Mary Simmons, "Mr. Gonzales was a career counterfeiter and drug dealer. The successful prosecution of this case was due to the commitment of detectives from the Narcotics Task Force and the Identity Theft Task force, who invested many hours of their own time preparing this case for trial. Mr. Gonzales dragged the case out for five years, through 11 defense attorneys, and numerous trial dates. Through frustrating delays and the commission new crimes by this defendant, these detectives stayed the course."