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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Board of Parole Hearings Denied Release to Convicted Murderer Juan Cantu
CDCR #C44806; Court Case numbers #SC028191A/#SC022229A

Kern County District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced that the California Board of Parole Hearings (BPH) denied release to convicted murderer Juan Cantu. On August 6, 2025, BPH found that Cantu continues to pose a current and unreasonable risk to public safety. Representing the District Attorney's Office was Deputy District Attorney Gina Nargie.

On December 2, 1980, at 1:20am, Cantu and another male broke into a small camper trailer located behind a main residence on Lotus Lane in Bakersfield. Once inside, Cantu threatened the two victims with guns and demanded their money. When one of the victims fought back, Cantu struck him with a gun and knocked him out. That victim's brother, Pedro Martinez, was inside the house near the camper. He heard the commotion and ran to the camper. As Pedro Martinez entered the camper, Cantu shot Pedro Martinez in the abdomen. Pedro Martinez died due to the gunshot wound.

The next day, on December 3, 1980, Cantu told a witness that he and others went to a farm labor camp to "rob wetbacks." Cantu admitted to the witness he shot Pedro Martinez. This witness cooperated with law enforcement. While housed at the Kern County Jail pending trial, Cantu solicited another inmate at the jail to kill the witness in retaliation for his cooperation with law enforcement.

On November 3, 1981, a Kern County Jury found Cantu guilty of one count of murder in the first degree with use of a firearm, two counts of attempted robbery with use of a firearm, first degree burglary, and solicitation to commit murder. After the appellate process, a Kern County Judge sentenced him to 34 years and four months-to-life.

On August 6, 2025, the BPH conducted Cantu's fourth parole hearing. Cantu is currently 67 years old and has served approximately 44 years in state prison. At the hearing, Cantu's commissioners focused on his insufficient internalization of programming, institutional misconduct, insight into his life crime, and prior

substance abuse history.

The Kern County District Attorney's Office asked the BPH to deny parole. The BPH found that Cantu was not suitable for parole and posed a current unreasonable risk of danger to society. The BPH has the option of denying an inmate parole for a period of 15, 10, 7, 5 or 3 years. Cantu's commissioners issued a three-year denial. As such, Cantu's next parole hearing date could potentially be in 18 months.

District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer commented; "Cantu has shown a complete disregard for human life and poses an extreme danger to the community. We remain committed to upholding justice and advocating for his continued incarceration."