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For Immediate Release  
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### **PRESS RELEASE** **SACRAMENTO MAN SENTENCED TO 10 YEARS IN STATE PRISON FOR TRAFFICKING** **TWO LOCAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

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Napa County District Attorney Allison Haley announced today the sentence of Marquez Jiron Thomas, age 20, who pled no contest to six felony charges and two misdemeanors related to the sexual exploitation of two minors. On October 16<sup>th</sup>, Judge Mark Boessenecker sentenced Mr. Thomas to 10 years in state prison. In addition, Mr. Thomas will have to register as a sex offender pursuant to Penal Code section 290.

Mr. Thomas was convicted of two counts of Pimping, two counts of Pandering, Inducing Consent to Sex by Force or Fear, Stalking, Unlawful Sexual Intercourse of a Minor, and Possession of Child Porn.

Mr. Thomas' convictions in this case stem from his trafficking of two 17 year old- high school students from Napa. The investigation in this case established that in December of 2018 he acted as the victims' declared "pimp" and arranged commercial sex work for them in multiple locations including Napa County, San Francisco, Daly City, and Reno, Nevada. Defendant ordered the girls to engage in prostitution on the streets of San Francisco (commonly known as "the blade" or "track") and in hotel rooms in various locations. Mr. Thomas also tried to recruit sex buyers for the minors by making online advertisements for them on websites commonly used for prostitution. He gave them rides to meet sex buyers and instructed them on the rules of "the Game"—the subculture of prostitution, complete with strict procedures, a hierarchy of authority, and its own language. Mr. Thomas financially benefitted from the victims' sexual exploitation. It is believed that he met one of the victims via Instagram and then met the second victim through the first victim.

The investigation in this case started after the victims' families contacted the Napa Police Department when they noticed their daughters engaging in suspicious behavior, including recent trips to San Francisco. The investigation was then turned over to the Napa Special Investigations Bureau ("NSIB").

Assigned Deputy District Attorney Taryn Hunter commented that "this case shows that Napa County is not immune to the growing enterprise of child sex trafficking in our country. I hope this case also helps to dispel the common misconception that victims of sex trafficking are only runaways or otherwise at risk youth. The reality is that anyone with a smart phone or computer can meet a sex trafficker, even in their own home."

If you suspect human trafficking, contact your local law enforcement agency. Indicators may include, unexplained absences from the home, unplanned overnight trips, secretive cell phone or social media use,

abrupt changes in appearance or behavior, the use of overtly sexualized clothing, wigs, or nail design, online activity that is linked to escort or prostitution websites, and new relationships, including having an older “boyfriend.”

Any questions regarding this case may be directed to Assistant Deputy District Attorney Paul Gero.