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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HEARING SCHEDULED FOR CONVICTED SEX OFFENDER

Michael Thomas Cheek was convicted of kidnapping, rape, and forcible oral copulation in Santa Cruz County in 1980. He was sentenced to prison but soon escaped from a jail facility in Contra Costa County and committed another rape, this time of a 15-year-old child in Lake County. For those crimes Cheek was sentenced to additional time in prison.

In 1997, when that prison term neared its end, the Santa Cruz County District Attorney successfully petitioned to have him declared a sexually violent predator (SVP) under the Sexually Violent Predator Act. Subsequent to that finding Cheek was committed to the Department of State Hospitals for sex offender treatment.

In 2019, the Department of State Hospitals deemed Cheek an appropriate candidate for conditional release and the Honorable Judge Stephen Seigel ordered his conditional release to Santa Cruz County. For several years Liberty was unsuccessful in its attempts to find an appropriate placement for Cheek.

In June of 2024, Liberty Healthcare of California, Inc. in conjunction with the Department of State Hospitals recommended that Cheek be placed at 204 Forest Drive, Aptos, California.

A hearing before the Honorable Judge Nancy De la Peña to determine if that placement is appropriate has been scheduled. While the Court has ordered that no public comment will be taken at the hearing, the public is invited to attend.

WHERE: Santa Cruz County Superior Court Department 6

WHEN: October 18, 2024, at 1:30p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Public Comment can be made in writing via email to criminalinfo@santacruzcourt.org or via mail to Superior Court, 701 Ocean Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060. All comments must be submitted by September 24, 2024.

REMOTE PARTICIPATION: Remote participation will be permitted at the October 18, 2024 hearing. The link for remote appearances is [https://santacruzcourt-org.zoomgov.com/j/1603307728](https://santacruzcourt.org.zoomgov.com/j/1603307728)