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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**District Attorney's Office Distressed by Release of Raul Rodriguez, Father of
Texas Seven Inmate Michael Rodriguez**

The elder Rodriguez provided the vehicle for inmates' getaway in 2000

(DALLAS – January 31, 2008) – The Dallas County District Attorney's Office is distressed to learn that Raul Rodriguez, father of Texas Seven inmate Michael Rodriguez and provider of the vehicle in which the Texas Seven fled authorities after escaping from a Texas prison, was released from incarceration on shock probation on July 26, 2007. The DA's Office was not notified of the decision by a judge in Karnes County, Texas, and just recently learned that the elder Rodriguez was out on probation.

"To say that we are shocked and appalled at the release of Raul Rodriguez would be a gross understatement," said Dallas County District Attorney Craig Watkins. "Had it not been for his assistance in providing the SUV that the Texas Seven fled in, the inmates may have never made it to Irving and Officer Hawkins would still be with us. It is a slap in the face to the victim's loved ones, this office and the entire criminal justice system for Mr. Rodriguez to be at home on probation."

On June 6, 2003, Raul Rodriguez, was convicted of escape and providing implements of escape for providing the Chevrolet Suburban to the Texas Seven inmates to flee authorities after escaping from a maximum-security prison in south Texas, on December 13, 2000. Officer Aubrey Hawkins, an officer with the Irving police department, was shot 11 times by members of the Texas Seven when he responded to a robbery report at a local sporting goods store on December 24, 2000.

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Shock probation provides defendants with an opportunity to receive probation after spending a short period of time in jail or prison and is granted at the discretion of the sentencing judge. The theory behind shock probation is that subjecting a defendant to the penal system for a short period of time can "shock" him/her into leading a non-criminal lifestyle. However, shock probation is only available when the judge is the sentencing body.

In Raul Rodriguez's two cases, the jury assessed sentences of five and 10 years and fines of \$10,000 (per case). The jury refused Mr. Rodriguez's request for probation at the time of trial. Mr. Rodriguez, who only began serving his sentence on February 23, 2007, due to lengthy appellate proceedings, served a total of five months on his sentences before a Karnes County judge released him on shock probation last summer.

To date, Mr. Rodriguez's probation supervision has been transferred from Karnes County to Bexar County, Texas, and he has no strict conditions on his probation.

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