



BUTTE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY



MICHAEL L. RAMSEY
District Attorney

MARK MURPHY
Chief Deputy District Attorney

JASON WINES
Chief Investigator

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
January 12, 2023

Hate Crime Defendant Found Incompetent to Stand Trial

A Butte County Superior Court judge yesterday found the Chico man accused of committing recent hate crimes in Chico to be mentally incompetent to stand trial.

Thomas David Bona, 37, is presently in custody without bail facing vandalism, arson, and hate crime charges involving the burning and defacing of the sign of a Chico synagogue and a Chico mural. On November 16, 2022, his public defender expressed a doubt as to Bona's ability to understand the nature of the criminal proceedings against him. Bona was then evaluated by a court-appointed psychologist who opined Bona could not presently understand the nature of the criminal proceedings or assist his counsel in the conduct of a defense in a rational manner. Based on the psychologist's report, the judge found Bona incompetent to stand trial.

Bona's vandalism charge stems from an October 7, 2022 incident where Bona was captured on surveillance video throwing a large rock through a window of a local Chico restaurant. Then, on November 2, 2022, a local synagogue's sign was found to be burned and marked with numerous swastikas.

After Bona's arrest, Chico police determined Bona was also responsible for damage to a Chico tribute mural to missing or murdered indigenous women. Similar to the synagogue's sign, the mural was marked with swastikas and hate messages.

The Butte County District Attorney's Office filed a felony count of vandalism, and two counts of felony arson each including a hate crime allegation. At the time of the current alleged offenses, Bona was on supervised release from state prison where he had been sentenced to six years for previous hate crimes. If convicted of all counts and allegations on his current cases, Bona could receive up to nine years in state prison.

The next hearing is set for February 15, 2023, when the court will determine where Bona will be placed for treatment to regain competency to stand trial. Bona remains in custody on a no-bail hold for violating the terms of his previous prison release and \$150,000 bail for his new charges.