



BUTTE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY



MICHAEL L. RAMSEY
District Attorney

MARK MURPHY
Chief Deputy District Attorney

JASON WINES
Chief Investigator

PRESS RELEASE

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Chico Man Arraigned on Charges for Shooting into Downstairs Apartment

A 28-year-old Chico man appeared in Butte County Superior Court this afternoon to face multiple charges of shooting at an inhabited dwelling on the December 26, 2022 incident that led to a four-and-a-half-hour standoff with the Chico Police Department.

Luke Sequoia Kitchel, 28, of Chico, was charged by the District Attorney with three counts of firing his shotgun into the apartment of his downstairs neighbor on Forest Avenue near Amanda Way in Chico. The Chico Police Department was notified when that downstairs neighbor heard a loud noise and found a hole in the ceiling of her bedroom. The victim then went to her front door where she heard another boom and was struck by shotgun pellets fired through her front door. Evidence of a third shot striking below the victim's front window was later located as well. Luckily, all of the shots consisted of "bird shot" pellets and did not cause any substantial injuries.

Other neighbors looked out after hearing the gunshots and saw a man, later identified as Kitchel, standing outside of his apartment with a tactical shotgun and wearing a bulletproof vest. When confronted by a neighbor, Kitchel reportedly denied firing any shots and fled back into his apartment.

The first officers on scene also heard a gunshot, at which point a perimeter was set and the Chico Police SWAT Team was deployed. The immediate neighbors next to the defendant's apartment were evacuated while residents in the surrounding apartments were notified to shelter in place. A standoff ensued and after four-and-a-half hours of tense negotiation, the defendant surrendered himself and was safely detained.

District Attorney Mike Ramsey said a search of the defendant's apartment located the shotgun in question, two additional handguns, live ammunition, spent shotgun shells, and the hole from the defendant's floor through the victim's ceiling. Ramsey said there are no known disputes between the victim and the defendant at this time.

The judge set bail for the defendant at No Bail, citing public safety concerns for her decision to do so. The defendant is scheduled to be back in court on January 4, 2023, to enter a plea with his public defender.

