



BUTTE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY



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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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REPEAT HATE CRIME OFFENDER CHARGED AGAIN

A Chico man, who was sentenced early last year to state prison for hate crime graffiti and vandalism was in court again today for new hate crime arson charges with out on supervised release.

Thomas Bona, 36, was arraigned in Butte County Superior Court, for arson charges involving the burning and defacing of the sign of a Chico synagogue on Hemlock Avenue and of a Chico tribute mural to missing or murdered indigenous women on W. 2nd Street over the past two weeks.

Butte County District Attorney Mike Ramsey said Bona was charged in Butte County Superior Court today with those arson counts plus a previous felony vandalism for throwing a rock through a window at a local Mexican restaurant on October 7. Ramsey said Bona acted alone in each incident.

In court today, Bona was appointed a public defender and had bail of \$150,000 set on the new criminal complaint. He was also held without bail for a violation of his parole on his previous hate crime conviction. His next appearance date to enter a plea will be Wednesday, November 9, 2020.

Ramsey said a large lawn sign in front of the Congregation Beth Israel was both burned and scarred with swastikas. The mural on the side of the concrete building on W. 2nd Street had scorch marks and was defaced with threats and swastikas. Ramsey said the window of the Mi Jalisco Mexican Grille on W. 5th Street was smashed by a rock through a window containing a SF Giants neon sign. Bona was arrested for that window smash later that same day, but was released to a local hospital to undergo treatment for an infected hand.

Chico police detectives, familiar with Bona from past contacts, arrested him near noon on Friday, November 4, 2022 for the most recent hate arsons/vandalisms.

Ramsey pointed out that on January 13, 2021, Bona was sentenced to six years state prison for vandalisms and hate crimes. **(See attached previous press release from January 2021.)**

Ramsey said Bona was released from state prison to Chico on those convictions in July of 2022, noting that California prisoners are given credit for time spent in custody before sentencing, plus

a 50% discount on all time spent in custody without prison rules violations. Bona had received over 500 days of in-custody credit at the time of his 2021 sentencing for time spent in jail and at the state hospital for mental problems.

Bona was placed on supervision by the Butte County Probation Department after his prison release with conditions that he seek continued mental health treatment and be subject to GPS ankle-monitor tracking as he had no home and declined sober living residences.

Ramsey said Bona's new criminal complaint is enhanced with an allegation that Bona was previously convicted on a hate crime which causes Bona to face the possibility of nine years and four months in state prison if convicted of all charges.

Ramsey said that Bona obviously has mental problems and has had many treatment opportunities both in custody and out, but Bona's continual terrorizing of the community cannot be tolerated and he will be held once again in long-term involuntary custody to protect the public.