



# BUTTE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY



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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **SLE Owner Sentenced for Possession of Narcotics for Sale while Armed**

An Oroville man, who owned and operated several sober living environment (SLE) homes in Oroville, was sentenced this morning in Butte County Superior Court on two charges of transporting narcotics for sales and one charge of possessing narcotics while armed with a firearm. He received probation from a local judge over the objection of the District Attorney and the recommendation of the Probation Department for a term of six years in prison.

Butte County District Attorney Mike Ramsey said that **Michael Mirton Anderson, 60, of Oroville**, was sentenced after previously entering pleas of no-contest to the charges in January 2023. Anderson, a long-time criminal in the 80s and 90s, had managed to turn his life around and received a Certificate of Rehabilitation in 2016 from the Butte County Superior Court. Anderson also became the owner, operator, and president of the Northern California Treatment Services, providing SLE homes for addicts attempting to change their lives.

Unfortunately, Anderson returned to a life of crime and was ultimately arrested in April of 2022 when the Butte Interagency Narcotics Task Force (BINTF) stopped Anderson driving his vehicle with two known narcotics offenders.

A search of his vehicle revealed a loaded handgun hidden between the driver's seat and the center console. BINTF agents also located a backpack belonging to Anderson containing two additional handguns, 67.61 grams of fentanyl, 1.62 grams of heroin, and approximately half a pound of methamphetamine. An additional 293 pills stamped as "M-30" were located in the backpack as well. Although the pills were marked as oxycodone, testing revealed that the pills were counterfeit pills laced with fentanyl.

Anderson's cell phone was also seized and a search of the phone located months of sales text messages.

Before sentencing, Anderson's attorney filed arguments with the court stating that Anderson committed these crimes due to Anderson's drug addiction and to provide for his family. Anderson requested a chance on probation to participate in drug rehabilitation (somewhere other than his own SLE) so that he could address his addiction and go back to helping be a drug and alcohol counselor.

At the sentencing hearing, prosecutors argued that the large quantity of dangerous drugs and possession of firearms showed Anderson's criminal sophistication and a large-scale drug sales operation that went beyond simply selling drugs to support his own habit. They urged the judge to reject probation and sentence Anderson to the upper term of six years in state prison as recommended by the Butte County Probation Department.

Prosecutors also argued Anderson's access to addicts through his SLEs was particularly concerning, especially given the quantity of narcotics found in his possession, and that Anderson's release would be an unreasonable safety risk for the public. It was noted that after his arrest, Anderson violated his own recognizance release conditions and was therefore unlikely to comply with the terms of probation. Finally, it was pointed out that of all people, Anderson should have known better than to commit these crimes. Given his position as a drug guidance counselor, Anderson regularly saw the devastating effects of drugs on the community.

The judge agreed Anderson's actions put members of the community at great risk. However, the judge said he believed he should give credit for the years of service Anderson had done for the benefit of the community, prior to Anderson's return to criminality.

The judge then chose to give Anderson a chance on probation to try to once again turn his life around. In exchange for a grant of probation, Anderson waived over 500 days of custody credits that would have otherwise gone towards a prison sentence. The judge ended by warning Anderson that if he violated his probation, he would be going to state prison for the maximum sentence of six years that was recommended by the Probation Department and the District Attorney.

The judge sentenced Anderson to two years of formal probation with conditions of drug treatment and an additional 30 days in county jail.



Michael Mirton Anderson