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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Chico Man Pleads in Shooting of Downstairs Apartment

A 28-year-old Chico man entered a no-contest plea in Butte County Superior Court this morning for shooting into his downstairs neighbor's apartment in a 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 with 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 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.

Butte County 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 were no known disputes between the victim and Kitchel.

Ramsey said Kitchel faces up to seven years in state prison. The defendant is scheduled to be back in court on June 14, 2023 for sentencing.



Luke Sequoia Kitchel