



# BUTTE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY



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## PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
April 5, 2023

### **Hate Crime Defendant Committed to State Mental Hospital**

A Butte County Superior Court judge today ordered the Chico man accused of committing a series of hate crimes in Chico last year to be housed at a locked state mental hospital until he can be certified to be mentally competent to stand trial.

Thomas David Bona, 37, of Chico, continues to face vandalism, arson, and hate crime charges involving the burning and defacing of the sign of a Chico synagogue and a Chico mural. However, in November 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 his defense in a rational manner. Based on the psychologist's report, the judge found Bona incompetent to stand trial and suspended criminal proceedings.

Butte County District Attorney Mike Ramsey said the primary goal of Bona's civil commitment to the state mental hospital system today is to treat and help him understand the legal proceedings against him and allow him to assist his attorney in his defense. The criminal case will resume once Bona has regained competency and can fully participate in the legal process.

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 detectives 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 District Attorney 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 he regains his competency to stand trial and is convicted of all counts and allegations on his current cases, Bona could receive up to nine years in state prison.



Thomas David Bona