



# BUTTE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY



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## PRESS RELEASE

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### Parolee Held to Answer for Violent Car Chase and Threats in Chico

A visiting judge at the Butte County Superior Court today found there was sufficient evidence to send **John Fowler, 63, a transient of Oroville**, to trial for intentionally ramming his 2005 Ford Mustang multiple times into a Dodge Challenger and threatening to shoot the Challenger's driver.

Butte County District Attorney Mike Ramsey said the charges stem from an incident on July 10, 2023, shortly after 5 a.m., when Chico Police officers responded to a call about a rear-end collision that occurred near West 8<sup>th</sup> and Cedar Streets. While on the phone with the 911 dispatcher, the driver of the Dodge reported he believed the collision to be intentional and not an accident.

The Dodge driver reported both vehicles had pulled to the side of the road after the first collision and Fowler got out of his Ford but then got back in and rammed the Ford into the Dodge again. Fowler then exited his Ford again, and approached the Dodge while holding his fingers as if pointing a gun at the Dodge driver and told him that he would "f\*\*\* him up." Fowler then got back into his Ford, then collided again with the front of the Dodge, causing its bumper to fall off.

The Dodge victim then drove off in an attempt to flee Fowler's unexplained violent behavior. The victim went northbound on Walnut Street, where he was rear-ended again by Fowler. Fowler drove northbound on the southbound lane and struck the Dodge once again.

The Dodge driver attempted to flee from Fowler, but his Dodge was difficult to steer due to the amount of damage and debris from the damage. As the Dodge driver drove into the south campus area of Chico State, Fowler rear-ended the Dodge again.

A Chico Police officer arrived on scene to see the Fowler's Ford pursuing the Dodge within inches of the Dodge's rear bumper. The officer stopped both the Ford and Dodge in the area of W. 1<sup>st</sup> Street and Orange Street and arrested Fowler based upon statements of the victim and the corresponding damage to both vehicles. The Dodge sustained major damage while damage to Fowler's Ford was moderate. Fowler claimed various excuses for his behavior including a belief that the Dodge was racing him.

Ramsey said there was no known prior connection between the victim driver and Fowler.

The judge held Fowler to answer for one count of criminal threats and five counts of assault with a deadly weapon. Ramsey said his office will file an additional assault charge based on the evidence presented today. Fowler remains in custody in lieu of \$300,000 bail as he is still on parole for a previous felony assault charge making today's case a "second strike" case. As a result, Fowler faces over 20 years in state prison. His next appearance will be on August 16, 2023 for setting of his jury trial.



John Fowler