



BUTTE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY



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PRESS RELEASE

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Oroville Woman Pleads Not Guilty To Injury to Child While Evading Police

An Oroville woman accused of running her car into a car containing a five-year-old child while fleeing a police vehicle, was in court today. The child was seriously injured as a result.

Banessa Santana, 33, of Oroville, appeared this morning in Butte County Superior Court on charges of Fleeing a Pursuing Peace Officer's Vehicle and Hit and Run Driving, resulting in serious injury. Santana entered a not guilty plea.

Butte County District Attorney Mike Ramsey said the charges relate to a March 12, 2022 incident where an Oroville Police Department officer saw Santana driving a vehicle and recognized her as being wanted on a felony warrant for a charge of Escape. The officer turned on his red lights and siren, but instead of stopping, Santana took the officer on a high speed chase through a residential area of Thermalito, running stop signs and traveling in excess of 50-60mph. The officer had started to slow down after three miles as the chase had become too dangerous and Santana had gone over a hill approximately a quarter mile away.

Ramsey said Santana then collided into the rear of another vehicle being driven by a father and his two children, ages eight and five. The father and children were taken to the hospital for treatment. The five-year-old child however suffered major injuries and spent several weeks in the hospital because of the collision. The child is slowly recovering, but will have permanent injuries.

Ramsey said Santana fled from her damaged vehicle on foot and remained at large until April 21, 2022 when she was spotted as a passenger in a vehicle by Gridley Police Department. When the car was pulled over by Gridley police, Santana jumped out of the passenger seat of the vehicle and led officers on a foot chase, but was quickly chased down and arrested.

Santana also appeared in court today on the Escape charge. Ramsey said that last year, on May 26, 2021, Santana had been placed on a home incarceration program by the Butte County Jail for a conviction of felony vandalism and a GPS monitor was placed on her ankle. That same day, Santana cut off the ankle monitor and deposited it in the trash can of a gas station less than a mile from the jail. A warrant was issued for Santana's arrest for Escape and was outstanding on the day she was spotted by the Oroville police.

Santana will next appear in court for a preliminary hearing on all charges on May 19, 2022. She is currently in custody in the Butte County Jail. The judge has denied her request for bail given her history of flight. She faces up to nine years in prison on the charges.

