

OFFICE OF THE  
**DISTRICT ATTORNEY**  
COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

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\*\*\*\*\* PRESS RELEASE \*\*\*\*\*

**RE: BENDLE PETITION FOR SANITY RESTORATION**

Santa Barbara County District Attorney Joyce E. Dudley announced today that 31 year old Nicholas Bendle will be released from further court-ordered treatment and the supervision of the Solano County CONREP (Conditional Release Program) and into the community after the Court ruled that he had successfully completed his intensive mental health treatment.

Mr. Bendle, who had randomly murdered an unsuspecting pedestrian with a hatchet on August 1, 2009, had been found not guilty by reason of insanity in December of 2011. The 2009 murder was adjudicated to have been the result of a psychotic break due to the rapid onset of previously undiagnosed paranoid schizophrenia. Mr. Bendle had managed over the years to complete several mental health transition programs, and in July of 2018, he transitioned to living independently under CONREP (of Solano County). Mr. Bendle has consistently been described by CONREP representatives as a model patient, with great insight into his mental disorder and relapse prevention.

On November 4, 2019, Mr. Bendle filed an Application for Restoration to Sanity, seeking release from the CONREP program. The Santa Barbara District Attorney's Office and Solano County CONREP supervision opposed Mr. Bendle's discharge from the program as premature due to recent life altering events in Mr. Bendle's life, as well as a lack of an aftercare plan. The District Attorney's Office consulted with Mr. Bendle's treating psychiatrist at Patton State Hospital, as well as reviewing years of CONREP program records, to conduct a thorough assessment of his progress as it relates to public safety concerns. The District Attorney's Office also looked into Mr. Bendle's life altering events that could derail the progress he has made and emphasized the need for a comprehensive aftercare plan.

A trial on Mr. Bendle's petition commenced on December 4, 2020. The Honorable Judge John F. McGregor heard the testimony of Mr. Bendle's psychiatrist since 2015 (Dr. Scott Turpin), his prior CONREP clinician (Christie Vice, LCSW); his current CONREP clinician (Mia DeSoto), and the Solano County CONREP Community Program Director (Dr. Sheela Puri). None of the expert witnesses opined that Mr. Bendle is a continuing danger as a result of his mental disorder. After considering the testimony and exhibits presented, Judge McGregor found that there was no significant evidence of Mr. Bendle's current dangerousness to the health and safety of others. As a result, the Judge ruled that Mr. Bendle's petition should be granted.

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