



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF TULARE

Tim Ward, *District Attorney*

PRESS RELEASE

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SEX OFFENDER CONVICTED OF HARASSING TEENS AT PARK

Late Friday afternoon, May 21, 2021, at the South County Justice Center in Porterville, a jury convicted Ronald Thomas, age 63, of one count of annoying or molesting a child with a prior sex crime conviction, and failure to file a change of address as a sex offender.

In early 2019, Thomas, an area transient, would frequently park his van at Veterans Park in Porterville and sit in the passenger's seat with binoculars. Two female victims, ages 13 and 15, would go to the park to skateboard after school. On several occasions, Thomas would whistle and "cat call" the girls, calling them "pretty" and "hot." On February 19, 2019, the victims called the police.

Thomas is a convicted sex offender. In 2018, he was released from prison in Arkansas after serving 22 years for sex crimes against four victims ages 5, 6, 11, and 12. The three crimes included rape, sexual abuse, and sexual solicitation of a child. The California crimes occurred less than a year from when he was released from prison.

"To have a child unwillingly interact with a predator like this is quite simply a parent's worst nightmare," said District Attorney Tim Ward. "I'm grateful for the victims' bravery in contacting law enforcement, and proud of our Crimes against Children Division for getting justice."

Due to his extensive prior criminal history, Thomas faces 50 years-to-life in prison at sentencing on July 9, 2021.

"Without the defendant's prior crimes being considered, all three of which qualify as strikes, his maximum punishment would have only been a little over six years. Our office did not, and will not, make any offers or concessions in this case. At two prior court hearings, two separate Superior Court Judges ruled that his entire criminal record should be considered at time of

sentencing. Make no mistake, our prosecutors will do everything in their power to ensure that this child predator is put behind bars for the rest of his life,” Ward continued.

The case was prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Kelly Habroun of the Crimes against Children Division and was investigated by the Porterville Police Department.

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