



San Diego City Attorney Mara W. Elliott



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Shopping Center Stalker Sentenced

Women were detained in parking lot by man who crawled under their cars

City Attorney Mara W. Elliott announced today that a San Diego man accused of harassing women at a Grantville shopping center has been sentenced to one year of probation and ordered to undergo therapy.

Orlando Joseph Chavez was charged with false imprisonment and battery related to a series of events at a strip mall on Friars Road where he accosted women in the parking lot, sometimes by crawling underneath their cars so they couldn't leave. He told one woman, "You can flatten me out any time."

Chavez, 73, pleaded guilty to misdemeanor false imprisonment. In addition to probation, a San Diego Superior Court Judge ordered Chavez to spend a year enrolled in STOP (Stalking Treatment Options Program), and he was ordered to stay away from the shopping area parking lot where most of his offenses took place. At his sentencing hearing, Chavez also pleaded guilty to a subsequent charge of soliciting prostitution.

"Stalking behavior like this can lead to tragic results. We commend the victims for reporting these incidents of harassment," City Attorney Mara W. Elliott said. **"We appreciate that they trusted us to take their complaints seriously and to hold this serial offender accountable for his bizarre and threatening conduct."**

Chavez had a documented history of approaching women in the parking lot of the same mall, telling them it looked like their cars were leaking, then crawling underneath the vehicles – effectively holding them captive. There were at least six known incidents involving Chavez between 2018 and 2020, when he was arrested and charged.

In one case he grabbed a woman by the arm. After she called her supervisor for help, he told them, "You girls are so pretty and should come with me," according to an affidavit for an arrest warrant filed with the Court. He approached one woman who worked in the shopping center on three occasions. When she refused to engage with him the third time, he followed her into her workplace and asked for her, according to the affidavit.

Another incident was observed by an off-duty San Diego police officer, who saw Chavez climb under a woman's car. The officer ordered Chavez to come out from under the car at least five times before he did. Chavez then yelled that he wasn't doing anything wrong, got into his truck, and drove off. At least twice Chavez reportedly harassed women and then followed them in his truck as they drove out of the mall parking lot.

He approached yet another victim as she waited to pick up her children at school. He was investigated for stalking that woman for nearly two years and for slashing the tires of her husband's car.

This case was prosecuted by Deputy City Attorneys An T. Dang and Katrina Craven under the supervision of Chief Deputy City Attorney Rebecca Zipp of the City Attorney's Domestic Violence and Sex Crimes Unit.

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