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City Attorney Secures GVRO in Road Rage Case

Gun-wielding driver involved in two collisions

A Gun Violence Restraining Order (GVRO) has been secured in the latest incident in a spate of San Diego road rage cases where motorists threatened gun violence.

In recent months, the City Attorney's Office has obtained five GVROs following road-rage incidents, which are on the rise nationally, according to federal traffic safety officials.

“We’ve all witnessed an increase in road rage incidents on local freeways and streets coupled with a disregard for driving etiquette,” City Attorney Mara W. Elliott said. **“We urge drivers not to engage when faced with dangerous situations. If another person threatens you or displays a gun, immediately disengage and call the police.”**

The latest road rage case was among 21 GVROs granted by judges in the past month. Those incidents include: a man who called police saying he planned to shoot four homeless men, another who said he would shoot employees of a grocery store, and a third who sent a video to his parents showing him cocking a pistol and texting, “I want to kill you both.”

The road rage case occurred after two cars collided at Clairemont Mesa Boulevard and Convoy Street. Dash cam footage confirmed much of what happened next.

After the crash, the victim attempted to pull over but was blocked by the other driver, who was working as a courier at the time. As the two men drove next to each other, the courier told the victim he had a gun and made a gesture indicating his intent to shoot the driver.

The victim tried to avoid the courier by making a U-turn on Clairemont Mesa Boulevard, only to have the courier pursue him while on the wrong side of the road. When the victim attempted another evasive maneuver the two cars collided a second time.

Getting out of the car, the courier again threatened to shoot the victim, and punched the victim in the face through the open driver's side window.

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In recent months, the City Attorney's Office has received court approval for four other GVROs in road-rage cases where:

- A man brandished a semi-automatic handgun in a threatening manner at another motorist. Police searched his home after the incident and seized a loaded 9mm handgun, a 12-gauge shotgun, and ammunition.
- A driver was engaged in a dispute with another motorist as they drove south on College Avenue. When the two cars pulled into a parking lot, one driver challenged the other while holding a firearm and falsely claiming to be with law enforcement.
- A resident of El Cajon chased down a driver he said he saw speeding through his neighborhood. When the two drivers got out of their cars, the El Cajon man pointed a gun at the victim and yelled, "I'm going to end you."
- A motorist cut off another driver in traffic and brandished a pistol. The other driver, who had two young children as back-seat passengers, drove off and called the police, who pulled over the respondent and found a pistol under his driver's seat and another firearm in a duffel bag.

GVROs are obtained by the Office's Gun Violence Response Unit on behalf of the San Diego Police Department and approved by a judge.

Studies by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety have found road rage to be alarmingly common and on the rise. Incidents can range from honking at another driver to murder, with the AAA finding road rage causing 218 murders and 12,610 injuries nationally over a seven-year period.

To avoid being the victim of road rage, both studies found that drivers need to stay calm and composed when encountering an aggressive driver. Tips include:

- Avoid making eye contact and resist engaging.
- Allow plenty of space between vehicles: If you keep your distance, you're less likely to do anything that can be perceived as a slight.
- Avoid honking unnecessarily.
- Don't retaliate: Many road rage cases begin with tailgating. Your safest choice is to let them pass.

Here are some tips to avoid being an angry driver:

- Plan your travel: Allow plenty of time to avoid feeling rushed or stressed.
- Take breaks: During long drives, it's helpful to get out and stretch your legs and give your mind a rest.
- Don't take things personally: Even if a driver makes a mistake or does something foolish, don't allow their bad driving to affect yours.

- Remember that safety comes first: The extra minute or two it takes to drive safely can save you from getting a ticket or worse.

San Diego is a national leader in using “red flag” laws to prevent predictable gun violence in situations where the gun owner has shown a propensity toward violence. GVROs are civil orders that prohibit the use, purchase, or possession of all firearms and ammunition. They can remain in effect for up to five years.

Before a court grants a petition for a GVRO, respondents are afforded full due-process rights, including the right to legal representation in a court hearing that is open to the public.

Find out more about how the City Attorney’s Office is protecting San Diego from gun violence [here](#).

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