



OFFICE OF THE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
TODD SPITZER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE

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Extremely Dangerous and Violent Criminal Who was Recaptured in Mexico Following Orange County District Attorney Warning Sentenced to Maximum Three Years for Violating Probation After Walking Away from Santa Ana Halfway House

SANTA ANA, Calif. – An extremely dangerous and violent criminal who was arrested in Mexico in March following a weeklong manhunt after he walked away from a Santa Ana halfway house, prompting a public warning by the Orange County District Attorney's Office, has been sentenced to the maximum of three years in jail for violating his probation.

Ike Nicholas Souzer, 21, was arrested in Rosarito, Mexico by U.S. Customs and Border Protection and Mexican officials acting on information from the Orange County District Attorney's undercover AB 109 Task Force that Souzer had crossed into Mexico near the San Ysidro/Mexico border.

Souzer was released from custody on March 20, 2024 after he pleaded guilty to one count of felony vandalism and was sentenced to 90 days in county jail (essentially credit for time served) by Orange County Superior Court Judge Larry Yellin and placed on formal probation for two years.

Prosecutors strongly objected to the 90-day credit time served sentence by Orange County Superior Court Judge Larry Yellin, arguing Souzer's prior criminal history, which includes stabbing his mother to death when he was 13 years old, attacking three correctional officers while incarcerated, and manufacturing and possessing a shank while being housed at the Orange County Jail, should require him to serve out the remaining two years in custody for making and possessing a shank in the jail last year.

In 2021, Orange County Superior Court Judge Gary Pohlson, over the objection of prosecutors, reduced felony charges to misdemeanors and gave Souzer 160 days credit time served for attacking three correctional officers while he was incarcerated.

In October 2023, prosecutors had objected to a three-year split sentence after Souzer was convicted by a jury of making and possessing a shank in the jail last year. Instead of the three years in custody sentence prosecutors had argued for, Orange County Superior Court Judge Michael J. Cassidy sentenced Souzer to one year custody time and two years supervised release. With 50 percent good time/work time credit, he was released from custody just three months later, in January 2024.

Just days after his release in January 2024, Souzer was arrested by the Orange Police Department for spray painting graffiti on a freeway underpass underneath the 55 freeway in Orange and giving officers a false name.

Following his release from custody on Wednesday, March 20, 2024, personnel from Project Kinship, which has spent years advocating for Souzer's release from custody, transported Souzer from the Orange County Jail to a transitional housing location in Santa Ana. Once he arrived at the house, he left and never returned. Souzer also failed to notify his probation officer of his whereabouts in violation of the terms of his formal probation.

After he failed to report to Orange County Probation, the Orange County District Attorney's undercover AB 109 Task Force launched an intense manhunt to locate Souzer and bring him back into custody.

In April 2022, Orange County District Attorney Todd Spitzer also issued a warning to the public about Souzer after he escaped from Project Kinship's Santa Ana office following his release on electronic monitoring from jail. After a countywide manhunt, the Orange County District Attorney's AB 109 Task Force tracked Souzer down on Easter at a homeless encampment in Anaheim and arrested him.

"Ike Souzer is finally having to answer to the consequences of his own actions to turn every opportunity he was given to make a fresh start into another opportunity to continue his life of crime," said Orange County District Attorney Todd Spitzer. "My prosecutors have spent years trying to keep this violent criminal behind bars only to be stopped by the very judges who instead of protecting public safety gave him break after break to turn his life around. Orange County Superior Court Judge Craig Robison put public safety first and is holding Ike Souzer fully accountable for his actions by sentencing him to the maximum allowed under the law. I am incredibly grateful for Deputy District Attorney Matt Bradbury and the prosecutors in our Special Prosecutions Unit and the men and women of the Orange County District Attorney's Office AB 109 Task Force who have spent years working to ensure that this violent and dangerous threat to public safety is held responsible for his crimes."

Deputy District Attorney Matt Bradbury of the Special Prosecutions Unit prosecuted this case.

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