



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 6, 2022**

Contact: Leslie Wolf Branscomb at  
[LAWolf@sandiego.gov](mailto:LAWolf@sandiego.gov) or (619) 533-5896

## **San Diego's First "Ghost Gun" Case Ends in Conviction**

*Defendant was first person charged and convicted  
under a City law banning possession of non-serialized firearms*

San Diego City Attorney Mara W. Elliott today announced the first criminal conviction under the City's new "ghost gun" ordinance.

Rene Orozco, 23, was set to be tried on numerous charges resulting from a police pursuit in late December 2021. Instead, he pleaded guilty on April 28, 2022, to three misdemeanor charges: evading an officer, carrying a concealed firearm, and possession of a non-serialized firearm, commonly known as a ghost gun.

The San Diego Municipal Code ordinance, which prohibits the possession of untraceable firearms without serial numbers, went into effect on Oct. 23, 2021 – just two months before Orozco's arrest.

**"The City's novel ghost gun ordinance is an effective tool for removing untraceable firearms from the hands of criminals,"** City Attorney Mara W. Elliott said. **"We thank Councilmember Marni von Wilpert for bringing forward this ordinance, which keeps San Diego at the forefront of our nation's battle against gun violence."**

Orozco was driving in City Heights on Dec. 29, 2021, when he failed to stop at a stop sign. When San Diego Police tried to pull him over, he led them on a short pursuit, abandoned his vehicle, and ran, tossing a pistol to the ground as he fled. A police helicopter was deployed, which detected a heat signature in a nearby backyard shed, where Orozco hid for about 45 minutes before officers arrested him.

Orozco was sentenced last week to 45 days of custody (with work furlough authorized), and one year of probation. His driver license will be suspended for six months and he is prohibited from possessing firearms for a year. The ghost gun recovered by police will not be returned to him.

The Eliminate Non-Serialized Untraceable Firearms (ENUF) ordinance was championed by Councilmember von Wilpert, who is a former Deputy City Attorney.

**“It’s clear from this conviction that San Diego’s landmark ghost gun law is starting to work to stop the proliferation of dangerous, untraceable firearms in our community,”** said Councilmember Marni von Wilpert. **“I’m thankful to City Attorney Mara Elliott and her team of prosecutors for upholding the law, and keeping San Diego safe from gun violence.”**

Under the ordinance, San Diegans can’t possess non-serialized firearms or components — effectively blocking city residents from assembling their own weapons from non-serialized parts or buying guns with no serial number. The ordinance was almost immediately challenged in court, but a federal judge permitted it to go into effect last October.

Since then, the San Diego County Board of Supervisors and other local municipalities have followed suit with similar ordinances. President Joe Biden recently announced plans for a federal crackdown on ghost guns.

According to a statement from the White House, 20,000 unserialized, privately made firearms were reported to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives in 2021, a tenfold increase since 2016. The San Diego Police Departments reports it recovered 545 ghost guns in 2021 -- up from 211 in 2020 and 52 in 2019.

###