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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Vindication for Vandalized General Vang Pao Statue
--Chico Police Arrest Felony Vandalism Suspect--

Chico, CA – It was a crime caught on camera and a crime solved thanks to a tip from an observant citizen. Wednesday, April 26, 2017 members of the Chico Police Target Team arrested 31-year old Luis Rojas, Jr., charging him with Felony Vandalism for the March 19, 2017 incident involving the statue of General Vang Pao located in downtown Chico.

Video captured via City of Chico cameras, showed an unidentified person kicking the statue of General Vang Pao, damaging the Hmong memorial. The suspect was seen riding a red bicycle to the area, sitting at a nearby fountain, then proceeding to damage the statue. The suspect then rode away from the area. Two different video surveillance cameras captured the vandalism incident.

The Chico community answered the Police Department's call for assistance in identifying the suspect. A citizen spotted the suspect and recognized the bicycle from the surveillance video. That individual alerted the Chico Police Target Team, leading to the arrest of Rojas, Jr. who was transported to the Butte County Jail.

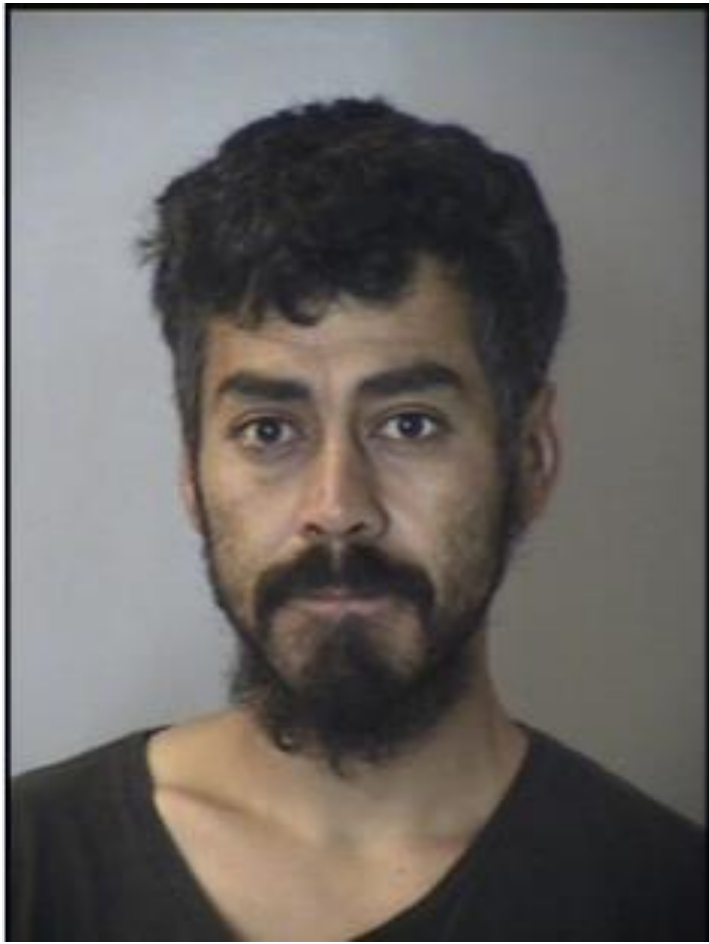
"This case highlights the success that can be achieved through community policing practices and is the latest example of the proactive work of the Target Team," said Chico Police Department Chief Michael O'Brien. "Our goal is to target all manner of criminal activity. While General Vang Pao is an historic figure to the Hmong community, this act of vandalism was an affront to all citizens of Chico."

General Vang Pao is considered a great leader and historic figure among the Hmong people. He is remembered as playing a crucial role to the United States during the Vietnam War. The downtown Chico memorial statue was originally installed in 2012 but badly damaged as the result of vandalism several years later. After repairs, the statue was returned for display in 2015.

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***Download surveillance video:**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gVlzVme1UMo>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HIQkWg9OGdq>

***Photo of 31-year old Luis Rojas, Jr. attached**



The Chico Police Department is committed to ensuring our community is a safe place to live, work, and recreate within!