

OFFICE OF THE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

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District Attorney



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APPROVED BY *Joyce E. Dudley*, DISTRICT ATTORNEY

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***** PRESS RELEASE *****

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Santa Barbara County District Attorney Joyce E. Dudley announced that Steven Mark Kunes, age 56, pled guilty today to a felony charge of escape by force as a result of him cutting off his electronic monitoring device. On June 2, 2012, he will be sentenced to 4 years in state prison.

Mr. Kunes had previously pled guilty in November 2011 to a charge of commercial burglary and a second charge of grand theft by false pretenses. He was sentenced in early 2012 to 4 years in state prison for his crimes. However, pursuant to the requirements of the Prison Realignment Bill, Assembly Bill 109 (Realignment), which went into effect in 2011, his sentence was mandated to be served at the Santa Barbara County Jail instead of state prison. Realignment also provides that minimum security inmates and low-risk offenders may be placed in a home detention program in lieu of incarceration in the county jail.

In July 2012, Mr. Kunes applied for and was accepted to serve out the remainder of his sentence on home detention/electronic monitoring pursuant to the provisions of Realignment. An electronic monitoring device that allows the county jail to monitor his movements and location was thereafter attached to Mr. Kunes's ankle and he was released from the county jail. On August 22, 2012, Mr. Kunes cut off his electronic monitoring device, effectively using force to escape from the home detention program. When attempts by law enforcement to contact or find Mr. Kunes were unsuccessful, a warrant for his arrest was issued. On February 24, 2013, six months after his escape, Mr. Kunes was arrested in Carpinteria on the outstanding warrant.

District Attorney Joyce Dudley commented, "This is the first prosecution in Santa Barbara County of an individual sentenced pursuant to Realignment who thereafter escaped from a home detention program by removing his electronic monitoring device. The District Attorney's Office will be vigilant in the prosecution of those who violate the law or put the community at risk by removing their electronic monitoring device."

The District Attorney's Office commends the custody deputies at the Santa Barbara County Jail, as well as Santa Barbara County Sheriff detectives in the Felony Fugitive Division for their work in bringing Mr. Kunes back into custody.

Mr. Kunes will begin his 4-year prison sentence at the conclusion of his original sentence, due to end in October 2013. Additionally, under Realignment, the crime of escape by force must be served in state prison as opposed to the local county jail.

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