

Police arrest Santa Ana man suspected of lobbing fireworks, brandishing handgun at protests

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Guns, ammunition and illegal fireworks that were confiscated from the home of Jon Paul Worden, 32. The Santa Ana man was allegedly seen throwing “mortars” at law enforcement officers and brandishing a firearm toward demonstrators during a protest against police violence on Sunday, May 31. (Photo courtesy of the Santa Ana Police Department)

Authorities arrested a man suspected of throwing fireworks at officers and brandishing a weapon at protesters during a demonstration against police violence held Sunday in Santa Ana, officials said Tuesday, June 2.

Officers observed Jon Paul Worden, 32, of Santa Ana throwing “mortars” at police who were attempting to disperse [a crowd of protesters](#) in the area of Ross and 4th Streets, Santa Ana Police Department officials said in a news release. He was also seen later that evening lifting up his shirt to display a handgun on his hip and brandishing it toward other demonstrators gathered near Birch and 4th Street, police said.

“This armed suspect with access to this cache of weapons and mortars, is what our officers have been dealing with from the aggressive and violent portion of protesters during this [civil unrest](#),” Santa Ana Police Chief David Valentin said in a statement. “Although the overwhelming majority of demonstrations have responsibly involved non-violent participants, armed suspects such as in this case, compromise the safety of everyone involved”

Police determined that attempting to apprehend Worden and possibly agitating him while he was amidst the crowd would pose too much of a risk to those around him, Santa Ana Police Cpl. Anthony Bertagna said.

“We didn’t want to get into a shootout in the middle of the street,” Bertagna said.

Officers monitored him until he left the area in a vehicle. Police attempted to perform a traffic stop, but a pursuit ensued, SAPD officials said. The chase was called off due to the suspect’s erratic driving, but Worden was later located at his residence in the 2600 Block of West Stanford Street.

An Orange County Sheriff’s Department helicopter spotted him leaving from the back of the home, and he was taken into custody by Santa Ana Police.

Authorities obtained a warrant and searched Worden’s home, police said. They recovered over 600 pounds of illegal fireworks, four AR-15 style guns, a short-barreled shotgun, three handguns, bulletproof and tactical vests, high-capacity magazines and thousands of rounds of ammunition.

Worden was booked on suspicion of assault with a deadly weapon on an officer, being a felon in possession of a firearm and ammunition and possession of high capacity magazines. He was released from custody after posting bond on Tuesday, June 2.

The suspect’s father was in the vehicle with him during the pursuit on Sunday, police said. He had not been booked on suspicion of any crime as of Tuesday, Bertagna said.

Another man who allegedly also led authorities in an earlier pursuit was arrested Saturday, May 30, inmate records show.

Ernesto Isaiah Luquin, 23, of Orange, allegedly threw a large rock and a beer bottle at Santa Ana Police officers near Bristol Street and McFadden Avenue that day, while shouting a derogatory statement toward law enforcement. The suspect fled but was later taken into custody. He was charged with two felony counts of aggravated assault on a peace officer.