



ERIK NASARENKO
VENTURA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY
NEWS RELEASE



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Oxnard Man Pleads Guilty to Felony Civil Rights Violation in Hate Crime Case

VENTURA Calif. – Ventura County District Attorney Erik Nasarenko announced today that Gerardo Rodrigo Vargas (DOB 11/16/80), of Oxnard, pled guilty on July 6, 2026, to one felony count of violation of civil rights stemming from a racially motivated confrontation outside an Oxnard grocery store. Vargas also admitted to several special allegations including a strike prior.

On May 13, 2026, Vargas confronted an African American man outside the Grocery Outlet located at 920 N. Ventura Road in Oxnard. The victim had arrived at the store to shop, and the two men were strangers. As the victim approached the entrance, Vargas quickly stood up, approached him, yelled the N-word multiple times and raised his fists. Vargas continued to threaten the victim, by saying, "I'm gonna f*** you up." A store employee who knew Vargas intervened and prevented the confrontation from becoming physical. The incident was witnessed by a store manager and captured on surveillance video. Officers with the Oxnard Police Department responded to the scene and located Vargas outside the store holding a bottle of vodka.

"Hate crimes have no place in Ventura County," District Attorney Erik Nasarenko said. "No one should be threatened or intimidated because of their race. This resolution holds the defendant accountable while reinforcing our commitment to protecting every member of our community and ensuring victims of hate crimes receive justice."

Senior Deputy District Attorney Hayley Moyer, a member of the Ventura County District Attorney's Office major crime unit, prosecuted the case.

Vargas is scheduled to be sentenced on August 3, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. in courtroom 12 of the Ventura County Superior Court. He remains in custody pending sentencing. Vargas is expected to be sentenced to 365 days in the Ventura County Jail, be placed on 24 months of formal probation, and be required to complete a six-month rehabilitation program, perform community service, and visit the Museum of Tolerance.

Case: 2026012539

Defendant Information:

Gerardo Rodrigo Vargas (DOB 11/16/80)
Oxnard

Charges pled guilty to:

- PC 422.6(a) – Violation of civil rights

Special allegations admitted:

- PC 667S2 – Prior strike
- PC 1170(h)(3) – Prior serious or violent felony
- CRC 4.421(b)(3) – The defendant has served a prior prison term
- CRC 4.421(b)(4) – The defendant was on parole when the crime was committed

