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**Merced Man Pleads Guilty to Manufacturing 10 Bombs and Destroying
Residential Properties**

FRESNO, Calif. — Wes Parker McDaniel, 53, of Merced, pleaded guilty today to manufacturing destructive devices and maliciously destroying two residential rental properties in Merced by means of explosive materials, U.S. Attorney Phillip A. Talbert announced.

According to court documents, between Feb. 1, 2021, and June 22, 2021, McDaniel made 10 destructive devices or bombs from illegal fireworks that he had purchased in Nevada, ammunition, shrapnel, fire starting material, and other items. On June 20, 2021, he deployed three of the bombs at a house in Merced. One of the bombs hit the wall of the house, exploded, and destroyed the fence, which was shared with a neighboring property. Shrapnel emitted from the device created pockmarks on the wall of the house, and a propane tank was badly burned. McDaniel threw another bomb at a different residence in Merced and placed two bombs near a car at an apartment complex in Lemoore. Those bombs did not detonate.

Following these incidents, law enforcement officers executed a search warrant at McDaniel's residence, yard, and shed and found four bombs, fireworks, bottle rockets, a .22-caliber rifle, boxes of ammunition, fire starting material, and other items used to construct bombs.

This case is the product of an investigation by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Merced Police Department, the Lemoore Police Department, and the Tulare County Sheriff's Office. Assistant U.S. Attorney Karen Escobar is prosecuting the case.

McDaniel is scheduled for sentencing on Jan. 17, 2023, before U.S. District Judge Ana De Alba. McDaniel faces a mandatory prison term of five years in prison and a maximum prison term of 20 years for the malicious destruction of property by means of explosive materials. He faces a

maximum statutory penalty of 10 years in prison for manufacturing the bombs. Each of the charges carries a maximum fine of \$250,000. The actual sentence, however, will be determined at the discretion of the court after consideration of any applicable statutory factors and the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of variables.

This case is part of Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN), a program bringing together all levels of law enforcement and the communities they serve to reduce violent crime and gun violence, and to make our neighborhoods safer for everyone. On May 26, 2021, the U.S. Department of Justice launched a violent crime reduction strategy strengthening PSN based on these core principles: fostering trust and legitimacy in our communities, supporting community-based organizations that help prevent violence from occurring in the first place, setting focused and strategic enforcement priorities, and measuring the results.

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