



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**HANFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT INVESTIGATION LEADS TO SEIZURE OF
4,700 POUNDS OF ILLEGAL FIREWORKS**

Suspect, who had prior experience with military ordnance, facing long list of charges

HANFORD, CA – Hanford Police Chief Stephanie Huddleston announced the results of an investigation into an elaborate illegal fireworks sales operation on Friday morning, culminating in the arrest of a Hanford man and the seizure of 4,772 pounds of illegal fireworks.

Hanford Police Street Crimes investigators arrested 33-year-old Reon Branche after serving a search warrant at his home on Lincoln Street in Hanford and discovering illegal fireworks for sale, items used to make homemade fireworks, a homemade firearm, and a MK-76 practice bomb. Because it was not known if the practice bomb posed a safety threat, officers exited the home and evacuated homes in the immediate area. The Central Valley Regional Bomb Squad along with Explosive Ordnance Disposal technicians from the 144th Fighter Wing in Fresno eventually deemed the device to be inert.

The Hanford Fire Department assisted with evacuation efforts before transporting the seized fireworks to Fire Station 2, where they were catalogued and weighed.

“Every year, illegal fireworks cause devastating injuries and millions of dollars in property damage,” Huddleston said. “This major takedown has made the community safer, but for anyone else who may be thinking of using or selling illegal fireworks, our message is simple: don’t do it.”

Branche was booked into the Kings County Jail but has since posted bail. He is facing the following charges.

12700(b)(3) H&S	Possession of more than 100 lbs of illegal fireworks
12670 H&S	Advertise sale of fireworks without a license
12687 H&S	Sales and transportation of special effects fireworks w/o pyrotechnic license
12675 H&S	Failure to record fireworks licensing numbers on bill of lading or manifest
12671 H&S	Sales, possession or storage of fireworks not licensed by State Fire Marshal
12673 H&S	Storing fireworks without a permit
12676 H&S	Sell or transfer dangerous fireworks to a buyer without a permit

12677 H&S
23920(a) PC

Possession of dangerous fireworks without a permit
Possession of an unserialized (ghost) gun

The Hanford Police and Fire Departments will be working together to enforce laws against illegal fireworks leading up to and on the Fourth of July holiday. Residents are reminded that they will be fined \$1,000 for using illegal fireworks and should only use fireworks that have the "Safe and Sane" label.

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