

OFFICE OF THE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

JOHN T. SAVRNOCH
District Attorney



06-852

RELEASE NUMBER

June 1, 2026

RELEASE DATE

Morgan Lucas, Senior Deputy District Attorney

CONTACT NAME

(805) 568-2418

CONTACT PHONE

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

Santa Barbara County District Attorney's Office Resolves Multi-Defendant Case Involving Illegal Commercial Fishing and False Advertising

Re: *People v. Connor Mitchell, et al., Los Angeles Superior Court Case No. 25STCV29015; People v. Taylor Grant, et al., Los Angeles Superior Court Case No. 25STCV17893; People v. Cody Martin, Los Angeles Superior Court Case No. 25SMCV03991*

SANTA BARBARA, Calif., — Santa Barbara County District Attorney John T. Savrnock announced today that the Consumer and Environmental Protection Unit of the District Attorney's Office, working with the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), and the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office, reached a settlement with multiple defendants related to violations of California's commercial fishing laws and false advertising laws.

The investigation by CDFW revealed that, in 2020 and 2021, three of the Defendants, Conner Mitchell, Taylor Grant, and Cody Martin, engaged in illegal commercial fishing, including fishing in Marine Protected Areas off the coast of Santa Barbara Island. Mitchell and Grant later sold the fish at Dudley Market, a high-end restaurant Mitchell owned in Venice, California. The seafood was falsely advertised as traceable, sustainable, and lawfully sourced.

Mitchell and Grant managed Dudley Market during 2020 through the California business entities Dudley Street Oyster Bar LLC and Shark Bite Fish Co., LLC. Grant later ended her association with the business, while Mitchell continued overseeing daily operations and seafood procurement. Mitchell and Grant also operated the commercial fishing vessel (F/V) Jamaica Day, which Mitchell used to catch fish for the restaurant. Cody Martin, 30, of El Segundo, operated the F/V Predator and supplied fish to Dudley Market.

Wildlife Officers served search warrants on cellular devices belonging to Mitchell and Martin, as well as the chart plotter aboard the F/V Predator. Evidence obtained during the investigation revealed repeated violations of laws governing California's commercial fishing and seafood industry.

Under California law, it is unlawful to sell sport-caught fish commercially. In addition, fish taken by a commercial vessel must be lawfully "landed" and documented on an electronic fish ticket before being removed from the vessel. Landing information is critical for CDFW and NOAA Fisheries to effectively manage California fisheries and ensure long-term sustainability.

The investigation documented numerous violations, including:

- Purchasing, possessing, and selling unlawfully sport-caught fish, including rockfish, bluefin tuna, and yellowtail
- Engaging in commercial fishing activity without required commercial fishing and fish business licenses
- Failing to lawfully "land" federally managed species, including rockfish and bluefin tuna
- Harvesting rockfish within restricted conservation areas and State Marine Protected Areas
- Advertising unlawfully sourced fish as sustainable, traceable, and lawfully procured

The case was brought and resolved as a civil law enforcement action under California’s Unfair Competition Law, Business and Professions Code section 17200 et seq., by the Los Angeles City Attorney, Santa Barbara County District Attorney, and Los Angeles County District Attorney.

As part of the settlement:

- Conner Mitchell, Dudley Street Oyster Bar LLC, and Shark Bite Fish Co., LLC were ordered to pay:
 - \$58,226 in civil penalties
 - \$45,000 in stayed civil penalties, payable if the injunction is violated
 - \$15,000 to CDFW’s Fish and Game Preservation Fund
 - \$1,773 in court costs and fees
- Taylor Grant was ordered to pay:
 - \$40,000 in civil penalties
 - \$10,000 to CDFW’s Fish and Game Preservation Fund
 - Prohibited from commercial fishing in California
- Gilmer Grant, owner of the F/V Jamaica Day in 2020, was ordered to pay:
 - \$10,000 in civil penalties
 - \$5,000 to CDFW’s Fish and Game Preservation Fund
 - Prohibited from owning or operating a commercial fishing vessel in California
- Cody Martin was ordered to pay:
 - \$8,000 in civil penalties
 - \$100,000 in stayed civil penalties, payable upon violation of the injunction
 - \$2,000 to CDFW’s Fish and Game Preservation Fund
 - Prohibited from commercial fishing in California

The settlement also requires compliance oversight measures, public disclosure notices, and additional financial penalties should future violations occur.

District Attorney Savrnock thanked Senior Deputy District Attorney Morgan Lucas, who handled the case on behalf of the Santa Barbara District Attorney’s Office, as well as those who worked on the case at CDFW, the Los Angeles City Attorney’s Office, and the Los Angeles County District Attorney’s Office. District Attorney Savrnock also said: “Violating fishing regulations that are intended to preserve Marine Protected Areas threatens the environment and the fishing industry that depends on sustainable fish stocks in the future. I am proud that my office was able to work with CDFW to protect these valuable resources.”

* * * * *