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Attorney for Plaintiff EUGENE EVAN BAKER

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EUGENE EVAN BAKER,

VS.

Plaintiff,

ERIC H. HOLDER, JR., in his official capacity as ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES, with offices at 950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20530-0001

Defendant.

Case No:

COMPLAINT FOR DECLARATORY AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

1. This is an action for declaratory and injunctive relief in order that plaintiff EUGENE EVAN BAKER (hereinafter "plaintiff" or "BAKER") may lawfully own, possess and use a firearm in the exercise of his rights under the Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States although he was convicted in the State of California of a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence in 1997, because, in 2002, that state conviction was expunged and set-aside without permanent restriction pursuant to California law, and said / / /

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

- 2. This court has jurisdiction pursuant to the Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States; 28 U.S.C. §1331 (federal question jurisdiction); 28 U.S.C. §\$2201 and 2202 (Declaratory Judgment Act); 18 U.S.C. §\$921(a)(33)(B)(ii) and 922(g)(9)(firearms regulation) and Rule 57 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.
- 3. Venue in the Central District of California is proper under 28 U.S.C. §1391(e), as Mr. BAKER, the plaintiff, resides herein, no real property is involved in this action and because defendant Attorney General ERIC H. HOLDER, Jr., has offices within this District.

PARTIES

- 4. Plaintiff EUGENE EVAN BAKER is a citizen of the United States and a resident of the City of Somis, California.
- 5. Defendant ERIC H. HOLDER, Jr., is the Attorney General of the United States, and, as the chief law enforcement officer of the government of the United States, would be responsible for the prosecution of Mr. BAKER pursuant to 18 U.S.C. §922(g)(9) should Mr. BAKER be found to own, possess or use a firearm. Attorney General HOLDER is being sued in his official capacity only.
- 6. An actual controversy presently exists between the parties concerning Mr. BAKER's susceptibility to prosecution for a future alleged violation of 18 U.S.C. §922(g)(9). That controversy is justiciable in character and there is no plain, speedy or adequate relief necessary to ensure plaintiff's constitutional rights.

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7. A declaratory judgment will terminate the uncertainty and controversy between the parties.

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8. A permanent injunction, enjoining defendant from enforcing 18 U.S.C. §922(g)(9) against plaintiff for so long as he remains free of any disqualifying criminal conviction, will protect plaintiffs' rights after the final resolution of these proceedings.

OPERATIVE FACTS

- 9. On September 29th, 1997, in the (then) Ventura County Municipal Court, plaintiff, was convicted upon his plea of Nolo Contendere of violating California Penal Code \$273.5(a) (hereafter "\$273.5(a)"), [Infliction of Corporal Injury on Current or Former Spouse or Cohabitant] as a misdemeanor. The events giving rise to the above-stated prosecution did not involve the use of firearms.
- 10. On October 20th, 1997, Plaintiff was sentenced to a three year probationary sentence with certain terms and conditions; among which was a condition that he "not own, possess, or have access to any firearm or dangerous weapon" for a period of 10 years pursuant to California Penal Code \$12021(c)(1) [hereafter "\$12021(c)(1)"].
- 11. Plaintiff successfully completed all of the terms of his probation involving the performance or non-performance of certain acts and, on February 24th, 2002, submitted his application for expungement and set-aside pursuant to California Penal Code §\$1203.4 [hereafter §1203.4"]. The Ventura County form utilized by plaintiff is a joint application and Order form for expungement and set-aside under both \$1203.4 [including all provisions of \$1203.4] and California Penal Code \$1203.4a. \$1203.4a addresses those convicted of a misdemeanor but not granted probation, but since plaintiff was

granted probation, all future mentions of the expungement and setaside of his \$273.5(a) conviction will reference \$1203.4.

- 12. On June 19th, 2002, Judge Clark of the Ventura County Superior Court granted the motion under \$1203.4 and signed an Order, thereby ordering the within conviction be set aside, a plea of not guilty be entered, and the original criminal complaint dismissed. (Attached hereto is Exhibit 1, a copy of said signed Order, and incorporated herein by reference as though fully set forth at this place.)
- 13. Exhibit 1, did not contain any language that plaintiff, as an individual, was thereafter uniquely prohibited from personally shipping, transporting, possessing, or receiving firearms once the 10 year suspension of his gun rights pursuant to \$12021(c)(1) ended.
- 14. The 10 year suspension of his firearm rights remained in force until it expired on October 20th, 2007. From the date of his 1997 arrest to the present, including his probationary term and the entire 10 year term of \$12021(c)(1), plaintiff has never been convicted, charged or even accused of any other criminal behavior.
- 15. In early June, 2009, plaintiff inquired of the personnel at Ojai Valley Surplus, a Federally licensed firearms dealer, located in Ojai, Ventura County, California, if he was legally entitled to purchase a firearm. After said personnel performed a necessary suitability check, he was informed that he was barred from purchasing a firearm pursuant to 18 U.S.C. §922(g)(9).
- 16. On March 11, 2010, plaintiff appeared with counsel in the Ventura County Superior Court and moved for an Order declaring that he was legally entitled under both California and Federal law to purchase and own a firearm.

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17. The Court (Judge Edward Brodie, presiding), after stating that although he could not and would not make any order "regarding federal law," granted plaintiff's motion and signed an amended Order declaring that plaintiff "is entitled to purchase, own and possess firearms consistent with the laws of the State of California." (Attached hereto are Exhibit 2, a copy of the transcript of said proceeding, and Exhibit 3, a copy of said amended Order, both incorporated herein by reference as though fully set forth at this place.)

18. Plaintiff desires to purchase one or more firearms for his personal protection and the protection of his family and property but does not wish to run the risk of being arrested, charged, convicted and punished pursuant to 18 U.S.C. §922(g)(9) in the attempted exercise of his Second Amendment rights.

RELEVANT CALIFORNIA PENAL STATUTES

19. Mr. BAKER was convicted of violating California Penal Code on October 29, 1997. §273.5(a), in relevant part, \$273.5(a) provides:

> "Any person who willfully inflicts upon a person who is his or her spouse, former spouse, cohabitant, former cohabitant, or the mother or father of his or her child, corporal injury resulting in a traumatic condition, is guilty of a felony, and upon conviction thereof shall be punished by imprisonment in the state prison for two, three, or four years, or in a county jail for not more than one year, or by a fine of up to six thousand dollars (\$6,000.00) or by both that fine and imprisonment."

20. All persons convicted of violating §273.5(a) are subject to 26 a statutory 10-year - not lifetime - ban on firearm possession pursuant to Penal Code \$12021(c)(1):

"Except as provided in subdivision (a) or paragraph (2) of this subdivision, any person who has been convicted of a misdemeanor violation of Section ..., 273.5, ..., and who, years of the conviction, owns, 10 within purchases, receives, or has in his or her possession or under his or her custody or control, any firearm is guilty of a public punishable shall be offense, which imprisonment in a county jail not exceeding one year or in the state prison,"

California Penal Code §1203.4 provides the means whereby 21. those who have successfully completed a grant of probation after 9 having been convicted of certain penal offenses may petition the 10 | court to grant expungement and set-aside relief. In relevant part, §1203.4 provides:

> In any case in which a defendant has fulfilled the conditions of probation for the entire period of probation, or has discharged prior to the termination of the period of probation, or in any other case in which a court, in its discretion and the justice, determines interests of defendant should be granted the relief available under this section, the defendant shall, at any time after the termination of the period of probation, if he or she is not then serving a sentence for any offense, on probation for any offense, or charged with the commission of any offense, be permitted by the court to withdraw his or her plea of guilty or plea of nolo contendere and enter a plea of not guilty; or, if he or she has been convicted after a plea of guilty, the court shall set aside the verdict of guilty; and, in either case, the court shall thereupon dismiss the accusations or information against the defendant and except as noted below, he or she shall thereafter be released from all penalties and disabilities resulting from the offense of which he or she has been convicted,

> Dismissal of an accusation or information pursuant to this section does not permit a person to own, possess, or have in his or her custody or control any firearm or prevent his or her conviction under Section 12021."

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22. Thus, all persons who have been convicted in a California court of misdemeanor spousal abuse are, without doubt, subject to a 10-year ban on firearm possession pursuant to \$12021(c)(1). \$1203.4 takes cognizance of this fact by recognizing that whatever time remains of the 10-year ban stays in full force and effect until the entire ten years have elapsed, thereby delaying the full implementation of the benefits of \$1203.4 until that date. However, once those ten years have ended, assuming no further criminal behavior (as here), there is no longer any California restriction whatsoever upon an individuals right to "own, possess, or have in his or her custody or control any firearm,"

RELEVANT FEDERAL FIREARM LAW

- 23. The Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States reads: "A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed."
- 24. 18 U.S.C. §922(g)(9) reads: "It shall be unlawful for any person...who has been convicted in any court of a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence [hereafter, "MCDV"], to ship or transport in interstate or foreign commerce, or possess in or affecting commerce, any firearm or ammunition; or to receive any firearm or ammunition which has been shipped or transported in interstate or foreign commerce."
- 25. 18 U.S.C. §921(a)(33)(A)(i) defines a "MCDV." There is no dispute that the California crime for which Mr. BAKER was convicted is an "MCDV," and, unless he qualifies for an exception to 18 U.S.C. §922(g)(9), he would be subject to a lifetime ban on firearm possession.

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"A person shall not be considered to have been convicted of such an offense for purposes of this chapter if the conviction has been expunged or set aside, or is an offense for which the person has been pardoned or has had civil rights restored (if the law οf the jurisdiction provides for the loss of civil rights under such an offense) unless the pardon, expungement, or restoration of civil rights expressly provides that the person may not ship, transport, possess, or receive firearms."

FIRST CLAIM FOR RELIEF

DECLARATORY RELIEF

THE EXPUNGEMENT AND SET-ASIDE OF HIS 1997 MISDEMEANOR CONVICTION PERMITS MR. BAKER TO POSSESS AND OWN A FIREARM PURSUANT TO THE SECOND AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES

- The allegations of Paragraphs 1 through 26 are repeated as if fully set forth herein.
- 28. Plaintiff seeks Declaratory Relief on the ground that \$1203.4's inclusionary reference that "Dismissal of an accusation or information pursuant to this section does not permit a person to own, possess, or have in his or her custody or control any firearm or prevent his or her conviction under Section 12021. " serves 23 to recognize the fact that is merely a recognition that all persons 24 granted relief under §1203.4 must still obey all laws of the State 25 of California. When Mr. BAKER applied for and obtained relief under 26 \$1203.4 he was still within the ten-year suspension of his Second 27 Amendment rights under §12021(c)(1) and could not - at that time and 28 until the full ten years had passed - possess a firearm. Pursuant

1 to California law, when that period ended and he was no longer subject to the temporal restriction of \$12021(c)(1), he was lawfully 3 eligible to possess firearms.

29. Exhibit 3, the most recent Order of Ventura Superior Court Judge Edward Brodie, declared that plaintiff "is entitled to purchase, own and possess firearms consistent with the laws of the State of California."

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- 30. Further, 18 U.S.C. §921(a)(33)(B)(ii) holds that a person having been convicted of an "MCDV" shall not be considered to have 10 | been convicted if that "conviction has been expunged or set aside" unless "unless the pardon, expungement, or restoration of civil rights expressly provides that the person may not ship, transport, 13 possess, or receive firearms." The relief granted plaintiff under 14 | \$1203.4, as one having been convicted of an "MCDV," is unlimited but 15 | merely postpones the right to exercise Second Amendment rights until 16 the ten-year ban on firearm possession under \$12021(c)(1) has ended. 17 Exhibit 1 contains no language remotely similar to the "unless the pardon, expungement, or restoration of civil rights expressly provides that the person may not ship, transport, possess, or receive firearms" provision of 18 U.S.C. §921(a)(33)(B)(ii).
- 31. Inasmuch as the relief afforded by \$1203.4 complies with 22 the provisions of 18 U.S.C. §921(a)(33)(B)(ii) providing relief from the lifetime ban on firearm possession imposed on those convicted of an "MCDV" by 18 U.S.C. §922(g)(9), plaintiff is eligible under 25 federal law to possess firearms and ammunition.
- 32. Plaintiff seeks a Declaration pursuant to 26 18 U.S.C. 28 / / /

SECOND CLAIM FOR RELIEF

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INJUNCTIVE RELIEF

UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION, SECOND AMENDMENT

- 33. The allegations of Paragraphs 1 through 32 are repeated as if fully set forth herein.
- 34. Plaintiff fears that despite the issuance of a Declaration that he does not come within the reach of 18 U.S.C. §922(g)(9), he will be susceptible to arrest for a violation of 18 U.S.C. \$922(g)(9) unless defendant and his representatives are permanently enjoined from arresting him for so long as he does not come within the reach of 18 U.S.C. \$922(q)(9).
- 35. Plaintiff further fears that despite the issuance of a Declaration that he does not come within the reach of 18 U.S.C. \$922(g)(9), his name and other uniquely identifying information 17 | remains within the defendant's computerized records, lists and data- $18\,
 lap{\hspace{-0.1cm}\lceil}\,$ bases, and that for so long as this information remains in said computers and other repositories defendant and his representatives, who may be unaware of the issuance of the within-requested Declaration, may unknowingly arrest plaintiff based upon stale and, now, non-disqualifying information.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff EUGENE EVAN BAKER respectfully asks that this Court enter a judgment in his favor and against the Defendant 26 as follows:

Issue a judicial Declaration that the expungement and set-28 aside of his conviction of a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence by a competent California Court removes EUGENE EVAN BAKER from the stricture of 18 U.S.C. §922(q)(9).

- 2. Issue a judicial Declaration that since October 20th, 2007, EUGENE EVAN BAKER has been entitled to exercise his rights under the Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States and that he is entitled under federal law to purchase, own and possess firearms and ammunition without risk and threat of prosecution by Defendant and his representatives.
- 3. Enjoin the Defendant and his representatives from arresting and prosecuting EUGENE EVAN BAKER for any future alleged violation of 18 U.S.C. §922(g)(9) for so long as he remains free of any disqualifying conviction.
- Order that all computers and other repositories information relied upon by Defendant and his representatives concerning those allegedly prohibited from purchasing, owning and possessing a firearm pursuant to 18 U.S.C. §922(g)(9) be purged of information and content concerning the person, all arrest, conviction and sentencing of EUGENE EVAN BAKER.
 - 5. Award Plaintiff costs and fees pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §2412.
 - 6. Provide such other relief as may be proper.

Dated: May 25, 2010.

Respectfully submitted,

LAW OFFICES OF FRANKLIN S. ADLER



EUGENE EVAN BAKER

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LAW OFFICES OF FRANKLIN S. ADLER State Bar Number: 056417 424 South Beverly Drive Beverly Hills, California 90212 (310) 553-8533

Attorney for Defendant EUGENE EVAN BAKER · MAR 1 0 2010

MICHAEL D. PLANET Executive Officer and Clerk

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THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA,

Plaintiff,

vs.

EUGENE EVAN BAKER, (Originally filed as EUGENE RYAN BAKER)

Defendant.

Case No: 97C008304

ORDER RESTORING SECOND AMENDMENT RIGHTS TO EUGENE EVAN BAKER

This matter came on regularly for hearing on 3-11-10pursuant to a notice of motion filed herein by defendant. Counsel for the defendant and for the People both appeared. Counsel for the defendant moved in open court for an Order restoring the Second Amendment right to bear arms to defendant.

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

FOR THE COUNTY OF VENTURA

The Court, having read the moving papers submitted in this matter and having heard the arguments of counsel on the motion, and being advised in the premises;

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1	GOOD CAUSE HAVING BEEN SHOWN, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that Mr.
2	EUGENE EVAN BAKER'S
3	r is entitled to purchase, own and
4	possess firearms consistent with the laws of the State of
5	California.
6	A copy of this Order shall have the same force and effect as
7	the original.
8	Dated: MARCH 11, 2010
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10	2-B-1:
11	JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT
12	(Seal)
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nereby certify that the annexed instrument is a true and correct copy of the original on file in my office. MICHAEL D. PLANET,

Executive Officer and Clerk,

By Mus Ture

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Deputy Clerk

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SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA FOR THE COUNTY OF VENTURA

COURTROOM	12	

HON. EDWARD BRODIE, JUDGE

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA, Plaintiff,

VS.

No. 97C008304

EUGENE RYAN BAKER,

Defendant.

REPORTER'S TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

Thursday, March 11, 2010

APPEARANCES:

For the People:

GREGORY TOTTEN District Attorney BY: LISA LYYTIKAINEN Deputy District Attorney 800 South Victoria Avenue

Ventura, CA 93009

For the Defendant:

FRANKLIN S. ADLER Attorney at Law 424 South Beverly Drive

Beverly Hills, CA 90212

Reported By:

DENISE A. POTTS, CSR 3869 Certified Shorthand Reporter

1	VENTURA, CALIFORNIA; THURSDAY, MARCH 11, 2010
2	A.M. SESSION
3	000
4	MS. LYYTIKAINEN: Good morning, your Honor. Would
5	the Court please call the Eugene Baker matter. Lisa
6	Lyytikainen on behalf of the People.
7	MR. ADLER: Frank S. Adler, A-d-l-e-r, on behalf of
8	Mr. Baker, your Honor.
9	THE COURT: I didn't get a response from the People.
10	Did you file one?
11	MS. LYYTIKAINEN: I did not, your Honor. I received
12	this just a couple of days ago and my only argument to the
13	Court is going to be this Court's not the proper venue for
14	this matter to be heard.
15	THE COURT: You took the words right out of my
16	mouth. He's asking me to somehow decide what federal law
17	is. That's not my job.
18	MR. ADLER: Your Honor, if I may be heard, please.
19	THE COURT: You may, but it's clear that's what you
20	want me to do. He is under no proscription against
21	firearms in the State of California. He is under federal
22	law, or not, depending on what some district court says.
23	MR. ADLER: Your Honor, this is the court where the
24	prosecution was brought.
25	THE COURT: Matters not.
26	MR. ADLER: This is the court that took my client's
27	gun rights away pursuant to 12021(c).
28	THE COURT: Pursuant to state law.

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MR. ADLER: Pursuant to state law, that is correct,
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     your Honor. There is no case or controversy pending in any
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     federal jurisdiction involving my client. And I believe
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     that as long as this court had jurisdiction over the
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     initial prosecution, it can handle all matters relating to
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     that prosecution, including the restoration of my client's
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     aun rights.
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                         I disagree.
            THE COURT:
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                        California state courts both interpret
             MR. ADLER:
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     and apply federal law every day and that's all we are
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     asking to do. We are not even asking the Court to
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     interpret the law. The law is quite clear on its face.
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     And all we are asking the Court to do is apply that law in
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      this case as the Court would apply Miranda in a Miranda
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      interrogation or confession case, federal law in a
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      wiretapping case. We are asking the Court to apply federal
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      law in a case involving restoration of a client's firearm
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      rights. And I believe this Court has the authority to do
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      so.
                         I don't know where it would come from.
             THE COURT:
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      I don't know of any federal authority that would honor any
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      order that I made regarding federal law. It's not going to
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      happen. And I didn't just get on the bench here yesterday,
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      counsel.
                         I'm certainly not saying that, your
             MR. ADLER:
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              The federal law in question compels us to look to
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      state law for interpretation. And according to state law,
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under 1203.4, the case was dismissed, there is no

- proscription in state law against gun rights, federal law 1 follows automatically. 2 I'm not buying it. THE COURT: 3 I take that as a no, your Honor? MR. ADLER: 4 THE COURT: The long and the short of it. Here's 5 what I will do. I'm going to line out his second amendment 6 right to bear arms is hereby fully restored. And my order 7 will then say that Mr. Baker is entitled to purchase, own 8 and possess firearms consistent with the laws of the State 9 of California. But I'm not making any comments about 10 federal law and how they see Mr. Baker's rights, that's not 11 my job. 12 I appreciate the concern of the Court, MR. ADLER: 13 your Honor. 14 So you're satisfied with that 15 THE COURT: modification? 16 MR. ADLER: I have to speak -- I'm certainly 17 satisfied with the modification, your Honor. I have to 18 speak to my client to see if he wishes to pursue this 19 matter further. But I do appreciate the Court's concern 20 and ruling. 21 The order now reads that Mr. Eugene Ryan 22 THE COURT: Baker is entitled to purchase, own and possess firearms 23 consistent with the laws of the State of California. And I 24 have signed that order. 25 MR. ADLER: Thank you, your Honor. 26
- MS. LYYTIKAINEN: Thank you.
- 28 (Proceedings concluded.)

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA FOR THE COUNTY OF VENTURA

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA,	}
Plaintiff,	Ś
VS.	No. 97C008304
EUGENE RYAN BAKER,	Reporter's Certificate
Defendant.	_)

I, DENISE A. POTTS, CSR 3869, Certified Shorthand Reporter of the State of California, for the County of Ventura, do hereby certify that the foregoing pages numbered 1 through 3, inclusive, are a full, true and correct transcript of the proceedings held on March 11, 2010, in the above-entitled cause.

Dated at Ventura, California, this 14th day of March 2010.

DENISE A. POTTS, CSR 3869 Certified Shorthand Reporter



JUN 1 9 2002 VENTURA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COURT State of California MICHAEL D. PLANET VENTURA/SIMI VALLEY DEPARTME 存在CUTY Officer and Clerk The people of the State of California, 97C008304 Case Number. Plaintiff, vs. **DECLARATION AND** APPLICATION BY DEFENDANT ---EUGENE RYAN BAKER PENAL CODE SECTION 1203.4/1203.4a Defendant. ____, my driver's license number is $\times 587794154$ (M 1. My date of birth is 10 - 5 - 61 2. On the date of September 29, 1997, I was convicted of the misdemeanor offense(s) of violation of Section(s) 273.5(A) - Penal Code '3. I was: [X] placed on probation, and I have fulfilled all the conditions of probation for the entire time required. sentenced more than one year ago, without probation, and I have fully complied with the sentence. I am not now charged with, serving a sentence for, or on probation for any offense. Since being sentenced or placed on probation in this case, i have lived an honest and upright life, have conformed to and obeyed the laws of the land, and have not been convicted, arrested, or given a citation (ticket) except ____ 5. I request that the conviction be set aside, that a plea of not guilty be entered, and that the court dismiss this action pursuant to the provisions of Section 1203.4/1203.4a of the Penal Code. 6. I understand that the requested dismissal: (a) will not affect any revocation or suspension of my driving privilege, (b) will not prevent this conviction from being pleaded and proved in any subsequent prosecution, and (c) will not relieve me of the obligation to disclose the conviction in response to a direct question in any questionnaire or application for public office or for licensure by any state or local agency. of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct. Signed on at 🗡 _, California. EUGENE RYAN BAKER CII and DMV cleared on

ORDER

Pursuant to Penal Code Section 1203.4/1203.4a, it is ordered that the conviction be set aside, a plea of not guilty be entered, and the complaint is dismissed.

6.19-02

And allas