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## **WHEELS OF JUSTICE: Skate park owner confronted vandals, faces trial**

By: Dana Bartholemew  
Staff Writer

Northridge - The owner of a popular skate park caught two teenage vandals trashing his business and then allegedly barked out threats before revving up his jigsaw.

"Maybe we should cut off their fingers or hands," the businessman allegedly said to a companion in front of the youths suspected of inflicting thousands of dollars in damage to his soda machines and skate park equipment. "Maybe I should ... get my gun and finish things here."

In a case of "which crime is worse," the City Attorney's Office has charged Kanan Kadjar 24, of Northridge, with brandishing a weapon, terrorist threats, assault, battery, false imprisonment and intimidating a witness, all misdemeanors. The teens who confessed to vandalism weren't charged with any crime.

Kadjar, who owns Northridge S k a t e P a r k , insists all he did was catch and detain the youths after they did about \$5,000 in damage in the early morning hours of Nov. 18.

He insists that he never beat anyone, just tackled the boys. That he never waved a jigsaw - he doesn't own one. That he no longer owns a gun. That he made no vicious threats.

"I'm blown away. It's crazy," Kadjar said. "If they didn't come up with a story like (this) the police would never believe them."

His trial was set Tuesday for June 7. He has pleaded not guilty.

"I want to dismiss this (case) in the interest of justice," James E. Blatt, Kadjar's attorney, told a Superior Court judge earlier this week. "This is clearly a commercial burglary."

While a Los Angeles police detective had recommended that Pepsi-Cola not press charges over the soda machine damage because "the boys had suffered enough," one of the boys' parents donated \$1,600 to a Pepsi charity in order to avoid prosecution, Blatt explained to the judge.

Police reports identified the suspected vandals as Gerrad Riddle, of Burbank, Josh Zagher, of Tarzana, both 17 during the break-in, and Ryan Walters, 16, a student at El Camino Real High School in Woodland Hills, who wasn't confronted by Kadjar.

"This guy's a (expletive)," Gerrad's father, Walter Riddle, said of the skate park owner. "He beat the kids up. The kids did (damage) to the Pepsi machine - and that's the extent of it."

"He was tormented," Josh's father, Isaac Zagher, said of his son. "He's very much tormented. He's still scared. as it is."

None of the youths could be reached for comment.

Frank Mateljan, a spokesman for City Attorney Rocky Delgadillo, said the boys weren't indicted because Pepsi refused to press charges though the youths had admitted toppling their vending machines.

"I was trying to be the good guy and now I'm in trouble. I'm very upset. They admitted they did it. They said they trespassed. They said they vandalized."

- Kanan Kadjar, Skate Park Owner

In addition, he said "the defendant didn't offer much cooperation involving the alleged commercial burglary" and wouldn't identify the person who helped him catch the youths.

What was supposed to have been an after-hours skateboard ride instead turned into a night of torment - either for the teens or for Northridge Skate Park at 9301 Shirley Ave., according to the differing accounts.

The three teens arrived in a go-kart and broke into the park about 1:30 a.m. Nov. 18, according to the boys' statement to police. After skating its pipes and rails, they said, they sought to relieve their thirst by taking sodas from the machines.

Two men showed up as the boys were pounding on the soda machines. beat them up and marched them into the skate park office, according to the boys.

Thus began a 45-minute ordeal - which included bound wrists. snatched IDs and demands that the boys right the machines and pick up the cans of soda, they told police.

According to the police report, they were told to come up with \$1,000 a week for five weeks to pay for the damage or "the price would be doubled and they would find (the boys) at their school and torture them."

Kadjar, who is on probation for possessing a loaded gun in his car trunk, said the youths' statements were "unbelievable lies."

He said he and a friend arrived at the park after viewing an early morning meteor shower to find teen-agers wearing skateboard logos pounding on the soda machines with two-by-fours.

The result, he said: \$1,600 in damage to two soda machines; \$2,600 in damage to a newly built half-pipe course; and \$2,000 in damage to his office trailer.

"You should have heard the sound, pow, pow, pow, echoing through Skate Park," he said. "I said, `Guys, this is your (skateboard) sanctuary -- what are you doing?"

Kadjar, a lifelong resident of Northridge, said he didn't call police as a favor to the boys until well after they left.

"They both said. We're stoned. We've been smoking bud. We don't know what we're doing. Please don't call the cops: We'll pay for everything.

"I was trying to be the good guy and now I'm in trouble." Kadjar said. "I'm very upset. They admitted they did it. They said they trespassed. They said they vandalized. .

"They still aren't prosecuted - they went scot-free."

Daily News, Friday, May 31, 2002

# Skate-park owner won't face charges

By Dana Bartholemew  
Staff Writer

NORTHRIDGE - Charges were dropped Friday against a Northridge skate-park owner accused of beating and threatening two teens with a jigsaw after they vandalized his business.

Kanan Kadjar 29, owner of Northridge Skate Park, was scheduled to stand trial next week on charges of brandishing a weapon, making terrorist threats and intimidating a witness, along with assault battery and false imprisonment.

But City Attorney Rocky Delgadillo dropped the case Friday after the Daily News reported that the teens would go unpunished for causing an estimated \$5,000 in damage to the park.

"My client feels vindicated," said James E. Blatt, Kadjar's lawyer. "They (prosecutors) realized they couldn't proceed to trial."

"The community called me with more than 200 calls in support, offering to pay for my attorney and write letters in opposition," said Kadjar, who also was called to participate on several radio talk shows regarding the case.