

AUTHENTICATION
IN ART

AiA news-service

artnet[®] news

A Truck Driver Attacked Wall Street's Iconic Charging Bull Statue With a Spiked Banjo, Leaving It With a Huge Gash

The attacker allegedly cursed President Trump's name while beating the mammoth bronze sculpture.

Taylor Dafoe, September 9, 2019



The brass *Charging Bull* sculpture stands near the Financial District April 2, 2018 in New York City. Photo: Robert Nickelsberg/Getty Images.

New York City's bronze *Charging Bull*, a symbol of Wall Street power, was damaged yesterday when a man repeatedly attacked it with a metal banjo while cursing President Trump's name.

Onlookers watched with cell phones aloft as the man repeatedly bashed the sculpture. They were unsure whether the act was a work of performance art or simply violent vandalism. In the end, the bull was left with a six-inch gash and several scratches, according to reports.

Shortly after the incident, authorities arrested Tevon Varlack, a 42-year-old truck driver from Dallas, charging him with criminal mischief, disorderly conduct, and criminal possession of a weapon (which, it seems, is the banjo, which was metal and had sharp edges). After spending the night in jail, Varlack appeared for arraignment in Manhattan Criminal Court on Sunday.

Varlack, wearing a white t-shirt with the words "Let Us Not Forget The Ten Commandments," gave no motive for his actions. (The shirt may be a reference to Moses's anger at the Israelites for worshipping a golden calf.) Varlack was released without bail and is due back in court on October 16. Judge Althea Drysdale ordered him to stay away from city landmarks in the meantime and warned him, "Do not go back and visit the bull."



[Cristian Benavides](#) @cbenavidesTV

BREAKING: Photos show man as he defaced iconic charging bull statue in Financial District. [@PIX11News](#) [#NewYork](#) [#NYC](#)







108

[12:10 AM - Sep 8, 2019](#) · [Queens, NY](#)

[Twitter Ads info and privacy](#)

113 people are talking about this

The three-and-a-half-ton bronze bull has stood on Broadway outside the New York Stock Exchange since December 1989 when its creator, sculptor Arturo Di Modica, illegally installed the piece as a political gesture. Modica intended for the sculpture to be a beacon of optimism in the wake of the Black Monday stock market crash in 1987. Today, it's a popular tourist destination for selfie-takers and a symbol of Wall Street bravado.

"The guy wanted publicity and he did it for publicity," Di Modica told the *New York Post* of the vandalism. "He knew he was going to be arrested and he knew he was going to be in the paper."

Di Modica estimated that the damage would cost between \$10,000 and \$15,000 to repair. Fernando Luis Alvarez, a Connecticut-based gallerist who represents the artist, plans to drive to New York to inspect the work in person. He suggested to the *New York Times* that restoration would likely run at a higher cost, somewhere between \$75,000 and \$150,000.

Attorneys from Manhattan Criminal Court told the *Post* that they would seek financial restitution from the attacker.



[Matt Peterson](#)

✓ [@tweeterson](#)

Fed up with Trump's bull, vandal from Dallas took Wall Street statue by the horns, witnesses say

[https://www.dallasnews.com/news/politics/2019/09/07/fed-up-with-trump-vandal-from-dallas-accused-of-taking-wall-street-statue-by-the-horns/ ...](https://www.dallasnews.com/news/politics/2019/09/07/fed-up-with-trump-vandal-from-dallas-accused-of-taking-wall-street-statue-by-the-horns/)



3

[3:53 AM - Sep 8, 2019](#)

[Twitter Ads info and privacy](#)

[See Matt Peterson's other Tweets](#)

The bull has been vandalized before. In 2008 and 2017, it was splattered with blue paint. And in 2010, the artist Jessie Hemmons covered the sculpture with pink crochet.