



Rod Underhill, District Attorney
1021 Southwest Fourth Avenue, Room 600
Portland, Oregon 97204-1193
Phone: 503-988-3162
www.mcda.us

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Man put on probation for discharging a pellet air rifle from 15th floor apartment

Today, Multnomah County District Attorney Rod Underhill announced that 37-year-old Michael Erin Gorman received a probation sentence for shooting a pellet air rifle from his 15th floor apartment.

“From a distance, the pellet air rifle in question looked identical to an actual assault rifle capable of causing serious physical injury or death,” said Multnomah County Deputy District Attorney Eric Palmer, who prosecuted this case. “The seriousness of this situation cannot be understated. What Mr. Gorman did was extremely dangerous. Pointing a pellet air rifle that looks like an assault rifle from an elevated position on a busy weekend in Portland prompted fears of a potential mass shooter.”

After Gorman pleaded guilty, the court convicted him of one count of unlawfully discharging a firearm, which is a misdemeanor offense, and placed him on 12 months of bench probation. Gorman will need to complete 40 hours of community service. While on probation, Gorman must obey all laws and will be prohibited from being in possession of weapons. The court ordered that the weapon used in this incident be destroyed.

This investigation started on September 14, 2019 when Portland Police responded to an apartment complex located near Northeast 2nd Avenue and East Burnside Street after receiving information that a man, later identified as Gorman, was pointing a gun from the 15th floor and that it appeared he was pointing the gun toward people on the street.

Officers arrived and contacted a witness who said she heard several popping noises coming from above her. She looked up and saw the man with the weapon pointed down toward the street. The woman used her cell phone and took photos for police. Pursuant to Oregon’s public records law, a copy of one of the images taken by the witness is being included with this press release.

An officer assigned to the Portland Police Bureau described the photo as depicting “a white male, shirtless with a large tattoo on his left shoulder, shouldering a rifle, and pointing over the railing of a balcony.”

Fearing a potential active shooter, the Portland Police Bureau deployed a quick reaction team, which includes officers who have received specialized training to ensure community safety in highly volatile situations.

Police quickly located and took Gorman into custody without any further incident and secured the firearm. A photo of the weapon is included with this press release.

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The apartment complex where this incident occurred is less than a half mile from the Oregon Convention Center, which was hosting Rose City Comic Con.

The Multnomah County District Attorney's Office works closely with the City of Portland's Office of Youth Violence Prevention and attends the bi-weekly Community Peace Collaborative meeting, which is a coalition of law enforcement, service providers and community members who are focused on encouraging people to take a stand against gun violence.

The Multnomah County District Attorney's Office recognizes the Portland Police Bureau and its Central and North precincts that responded to this incident to ensure community safety.



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