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Two separate bias crime cases filed in Multnomah County Circuit Court

Today, Multnomah County District Attorney Rod Underhill announced the filing of two separate bias crime cases.

State v. James Keller (C# 20CR33691)

Keller is charged with one count of bias crime in the second degree, one count of recklessly endangering another, one count of harassment, and one count of being a felon in possession of a restricted weapon.

It is alleged that Keller subjected the victim to alarm by threatening to inflict serious physical injury because of his perception of the victim's sexual orientation.

According to court documents, on June 11, 2020, Portland police responded to a nursing home located in the 700 block of Northeast 122nd Avenue on reports of a disturbance. During the investigation, law enforcement learned that Keller had crashed his motorized chair into a woman seated in a wheelchair and that the act seemed intentional. Police spoke with several witnesses and learned that after another resident told Keller to slow down while inside with his motorized chair, Keller yelled threats, stood up and charged the man while using homophobic hate speech and threatening additional violence toward the victim. During the investigation, police learned Keller often carries a knife in the seat of his chair. Officers recovered a knife under the seat cushion of Keller's motorized chair.

State v. Robert Creech (C# 20CR33684)

Creech is charged with one count of bias crime in the second degree, one count of disorderly conduct and one count of criminal trespass in the second degree.

It is alleged that Creech subjected the victim to alarm by threatening to inflict serious physical injury because of his perception of the victim's race or the color of his skin.

According to court documents, on June 18, 2020, the Oregon Health and Science University (OHSU) Department of Public Safety responded to the pharmacy after receiving a panic alarm activation. When officers arrived, they saw a man, later identified as Creech, following an African American man while yelling racial hate speech. Even after being detained by officers, Creech continued to use racial hate speech and called it a "disgrace" that officers would believe the victim.

During the investigation, officers spoke with an OHSU employee and learned Creech initially approached the pharmacy in the morning and demanded his prescription be filled, according to court documents. The OHSU employee working at the time, an African American, reported Creech made threats of

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violence if the prescription was not quickly filled. After making the threats, Creech left the area, according to court documents.

A few hours later, Creech returned and once again confronted the OHSU employee and started yelling racial hate speech, according to court documents. After returning to the pharmacy, Creech directed his attention toward another African American man who was in the area.

Creech threatened the victim and used racial hate speech throughout the encounter. While being transported to jail by officers, Creech said he “can’t wait for you [the officer] to get shot and killed...,” according to court documents.

Like in all criminal and civil matters, electronic copies of court documents, which are not subject to a protective order, are available to the public through the Oregon eCourt Information (OECI) system.

No additional information can be released by the Multnomah County District Attorney’s Office at this time pursuant to the Oregon Rules of Professional Conduct.

A charging document is only an accusation of a crime. Keller and Creech are both innocent unless and until proven guilty.

The Multnomah County District Attorney’s Office was an active participant of the Oregon Attorney General’s Hate Crimes Task Force and helped draft the language that was in Senate Bill 577. The law, which went into effect on July 15, 2019, renamed the crime of “intimidation” to “bias crime,” added gender identity to the list of protected categories and removed the requirement that two or more people commit the crime in order to make it a felony in certain circumstances.

All potential bias crime cases, whether they are a felony or misdemeanor, are reviewed by the Violent Crimes Unit within the Multnomah County District Attorney’s Office. If a misdemeanor crime is issued, the felony-level attorney will retain the case.

If you are the victim of a bias crime assault or you are witnessing one, immediately call 9-1-1. If you are the victim of a bias crime and the suspect is no longer present or if you have information about a bias crime committed in the past, call the non-emergency line at 503-823-3333.

COVID-19 Notice

The health and well-being of all employees and community members we serve is a top priority for the Multnomah County District Attorney. Our office is working with the court, defense bar, local law enforcement and other system partners to carefully balance the needs of public health and public safety.

For information about the operational changes implemented by the District Attorney’s Office in response to the novel coronavirus, please [click here](#).

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