

Worker suspected of tampering with evidence

PORTLAND (AP) — Evidence in hundreds of criminal cases is being reviewed following accusations that a forensic analyst with the Oregon State Police tampered with drug evidence.

The analyst, who worked at the agency's lab in Bend, was placed on leave earlier this month, reported *The Oregonian* Wednesday. The woman has not been identified, but agency spokesman Lt. Bill Fugate confirmed she is under investigation over the handling of drug evidence.

The discovery of misconduct puts current cases and convictions in doubt and could cost counties thousands to retest and retry cases. Families of victims and defendants will also be affected as prior cases are called into question.

"My concern is for the victims who were injured — making them whole," said Deschutes County District Attorney John Hummel. "And for the suspects, that they had the proper result. This crime strikes at the heart of our justice system."

State police notified district attorneys across the state on Friday and issued lists detailing the affected cases.

Hummel said he must retest the evidence in 502 cases dating back to 2012. In Klamath County, District Attorney Rob Patridge said he's reviewing 328 cases dating as far back as 2007.

The majority of cases with evidence worked by the technician are from eastern Oregon. Ulys Stapleton, district attorney in Lake County, said only about a dozen of his cases were affected and that two cases remain pending.

Tuba-toting Duck completes Kilimanjaro quest

By Diane Dietz
The Register Guard

EUGENE (AP) — A University of Oregon classically trained tuba instrumentalist reached the peak of his singularity this summer.

Sean Turner carried a tuba up Mount Kilimanjaro — Africa's highest peak — and played "Mighty Oregon" at the summit.

Further, he persuaded an Oregon State University professor to document the feat on video for the Guinness Book of World Records.

Turner, a tuba prodigy who grew up in Corvallis, started playing with the UO Tuba Ensemble when he was a sophomore in high school.

At the UO, he earned two degrees in music education — a bachelor's in 2012 and a master's in 2013. He stands in, as needed, as principal tuba player for the Northwest's best symphony orchestras.

This fall, he starts his third year as music teacher and band director at Whiteaker Middle School in the Salem-Keizer area.

The decision to play a tuba on Mount Kilimanjaro was a logical extension of Turner's interest that culminated in an illogical result.

"Pretty foolish, I think," he said.

Turner's avocation is travel, and he likes to go somewhere every school break.

Turner, 25, wanted an adventure with his father,

John Turner, who teaches entrepreneurship at the OSU College of Business.

Turner's tuba is both his vocation and his passion. He carries around his mouthpieces to "buzz" tunes wherever he travels.

Buzzing tunes through a tuba mouthpiece is a practice technique that allows players to maintain their embouchure, which is the method of shaping the mouth to control the tuba's pitch.

The tuba, itself, was a problem. Schlepping 20 awkward pounds up the 19,341-foot mountain was not realistic.

So he borrowed a travel tuba, weighing less than 10 pounds, from Michael Grose, a UO associate professor of tuba and euphonium.

The loan came with a string attached: Turner would have to play "Mighty Oregon" — the UO fight song — at the summit.

Turner never had climbed a mountain with a tuba before, not even Spencer Butte. French horns, which are played there regularly, own that summit, he said.

But playing on Kilimanjaro? That might be worthy of the Guinness Book of World Records.

Tubas already make an appearance in the big book.

In Anaheim, Calif., in 2007, 502 tuba players set the record for world's largest tuba ensemble. A tuba and euphonium professor in Tennessee in 2013 claimed the title of "largest collection

of tuba-related items."

Kilimanjaro itself boasts a slew of Guinness accomplishments, including fastest ascent on crutches (2009), highest altitude haircut (January) and highest-altitude game of cricket (25 players at 18,871 feet in 2014).

Turner saw his chance.

No records involved playing tuba at altitude. Turner said he would apply for recognition from Guinness; it takes several months to know if the accomplishment would be listed.

Still, the ascent of the formidable mountain was not to be taken lightly.

The success rate for all climbers, all routes, is 45 percent — although climbers can improve the odds greatly by going slowly enough to let the body adjust to the altitude, according to the Climb Kilimanjaro Guide.

Between three and seven people die on Kilimanjaro each year, mostly from falls, hypothermia or acute mountain sickness (which fills lungs with fluid).

The two Turners set out on their 28-day trip. At one airport, security officials required Sean Turner to play his tuba to show no drugs were in the bell.

The Kilimanjaro hike took the Turners eight days. Sean removed the tuba from its case and wrapped it in sweaters in his pack to minimize the weight.

At base camp, at 15,000 feet, Sean took the instrument out and played "Somewhere

Over the Rainbow," a performance that itself may have established a tuba-playing altitude record.

The pair left for the summit at 10:30 p.m. with the goal of seeing sunrise from the top. The final 4,000-foot ascent was dark and frigid.

The temperature was 10 degrees, minus the wind chill. The wind was relentless.

Although Kilimanjaro's peak is bare — like a lunar surface — the going is slow.

"When I got to the top, I had mountain sickness, so I wasn't thinking clearly," Sean Turner said. "My lips were hypothermic and my fingers weren't really working."

"The tuba was frozen solid. The valves wouldn't move and the slides wouldn't move. Any condensation there was in there had turned to ice."

"We were pretty exhausted — physically and mentally drained, but we had got that far ..."

Turner spent a minute or more of the 13 minutes they spent on the summit breathing warm air into the tuba.

When the valves and slides loosened, he took off his thick outer gloves, stood under the rustic summit signs and played the tune.

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"Yay," Turner then said, pulling the instrument from his lips, and the pair began their descent.

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