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Release of convicted rapist met with protests

By Julie Shippen
Of the Emerald

A Springfield man who was convicted of first-degree rape and then released on his own recognizance sparked a protest at the Lane County Courthouse Thursday.

Nearly 30 women and men protested Circuit Court Judge Douglas Spencer's decision on Monday to release the 40 year-old man, Raymond Lee Dean, of 2572 E. St., who was found guilty of raping an 11 year-old girl. Dean was released on the conditions that he make no attempt to contact the girl or her family, who live in Cottage Grove.

The protesters, however, said the reasoning for Dean's release, which is based on such factors as position in the community and background, is a "sexist and classist system."

"Basically, I'm really appalled at that," said Janet Schwier, who started the protest in response to reading of Dean's release in the newspaper. "I don't feel that the word of a convicted rapist should be trusted," Schwier said.

After calling the judge's office "to make a rebel protest," Schwier contacted the Rape Crisis Network to form a protest group, she said. Women's Web and the University's Women's Resource Center were also involved in the demonstration.

The group chanted and carried placards with messages including, "Respectable Rapist? Nonexistent" and "Change the system that lets rapists out."

"I think Judge Spencer needs to know that blacks, whites, gays and straights are pissed as hell that men who are violent against women and children are out in the streets," one protester said. Another person suggested the group put Spencer under citizen's arrest for violating their rights.

The protesters then entered the courthouse in search of Spencer's office, with reporters and television crews following close behind. The group wandered

upstairs into the courtroom lobby area, but were unable to reach Spencer and returned to the front courtyard area for statements.

"I'm here protesting against the holocaust," said Mark Waldo, one protester who carried a paper banner with "1 rape every 3 minutes in U.S. — 70 percent Acquaintance Rape" written on it in red. "We want to raise a lot of questions about bail and how serious the system treats rape," Waldo said.

According to Thomas Fagan of the Lane County Public Defender's Service, the procedure which Judge Spencer used to release Dean "is completely consistent with the statutory guidelines."

Dean had originally signed a security release questionnaire/agreement in October of 1983, which took into account such factors as his financial condition, community ties, family status, background and job situation, Fagan said. Dean met all the requirements necessary for release, he said.

The protest members didn't agree the guidelines correctly denoted a person's character, however. "Wearing three-piece suits and owning a home doesn't really mean respectful," a protester said.

The more important issue to be examined is that of the "social problem of incest," Fagan said. The girl and her mother and brother had been living with Dean at the time, according to Fagan.

"Stranger to stranger is one thing, and force is another," he said. "When the average person says 'rape,' they think of forcible rape and violence. These are not the only things that qualify a rape," Fagan said. Relationships and age also must be taken into account.

The term "acquaintance rape" also implies force, he said, offering "quasi-incest" as a better description of the case.

No comment was available from Judge Spencer's office, other than that the sentencing is pending upon receipt of a pre-sentencing investigation report.

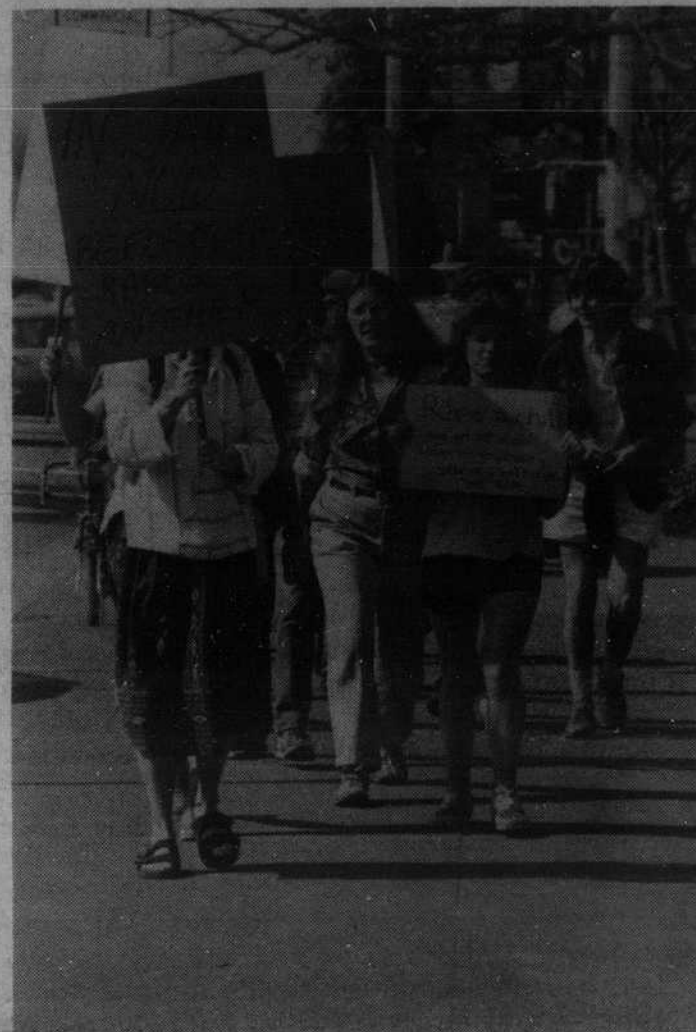


Photo by Travis Johnson

Nearly 30 protesters gathered at the Lane County Courthouse Thursday to express their disapproval of the release of a convicted rapist.



Just fiddlin' around

A group of eight student violists from the University were present at the airport Wednesday night to greet the world-renowned viola player Raphael Hillyer with musical serenade upon his arrival in Eugene.

Hillyer is internationally famous as one of the founding members of the Juilliard String Quartet, as well as for his viola teaching, concert tours and orchestral recitals.

He will serve as one of the four panel judges for the "Close" Scholarship Competition to be held at the University Friday and Saturday.

Viola students are coming from all parts of the nation to compete in the event, according to Bernard McWilliams, an associate professor of the viola at the music school.

Photo by Travis Johnson

Appeals board finds student innocent of cheating charge

By Doug Nash
Of the Emerald

The University Appeals Board has overturned a hearing officer's decision that a student cheated on a final examination because her answers were too close to the wording of the textbook used in the class.

In delivering its opinion, the board said there was not "substantial evidence" to show that former University student Nicole Harrison had cheated in Prof. Donald Van Houten's upper-division sociology class last summer term.

"The underlying facts, uncontested by the defendant, do not lead to ultimate facts in the findings on which the conclusion of violation of the student conduct code can rest," the opinion said.

In September, Hearing Officer Nelson Grubbe ruled Harrison had cheated on the test because her answers too closely resembled the wording of the class textbook. Harrison said she had used the textbook to memorize the answers to study questions for the final. She said she had studied considerably in preparation for the test, even taking time out from her job.

But Grubbe, noting that Harrison had not passed the midterm examination in the class, said Harrison could not have memorized the answers.

"No evidence was produced that the accused had an extraordinary memory capable of remembering all the statements written in her Blue Book," Grubbe said.

However, in its opinion this week, the appeals board said the University had never offered any concrete evidence

against Harrison's claim that she had, in fact, memorized the material. The fact she did not do well on her midterm exam "does not lead to the conclusion that she cheated on this exam," the board stated.

"The University did not present evidence that Ms. Harrison was incapable of memorizing the material in the text, nor did the University present evidence that only an extraordinary memory would be capable of memorizing this much material," the board said. "In short, the University did not refute the evidence offered by the defendant in her defense."

Van Houten could not be reached for comment; nor could Harrison, who is currently in Alaska.

Student Advocate Bill Kittredge, meanwhile, said he was "ecstatic" about the decision.

"It was our contention from the very beginning that there was no evidence and no case," he said. "It was his (Van Houten's) subjective impression that Ms. Harrison could not have done that well on the test."

It was brought out at Harrison's initial hearing that Van Houten had not paid attention to students during the examination, Kittredge said. Van Houten had used the time to read a paper, Kittredge said.

If Van Houten had been watching the students, Harrison would have never been accused of cheating, Kittredge added.

"The only reason this issue ever came up was because the professor was reading a paper he had been asked to review," Kittredge said.