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Robbery suspects have long criminal histories

All three were arrested in connection to car chase out of Island City

By ISABELLA CROWLEY
The Observer

LA GRANDE — All three suspects arrested in connection to the car chase out of Island City on Sunday, July 17, have histories of criminal activity in Oregon and Washington, according to state court records.

What brought the three — Jessica Spalinger, of Walla Walla, Washington, and Ashtin Romine, Clarkston, Washington, who were dating at the time of their arrests, according to Spalinger's interview with law enforcement, and Demus Montez, of Hermiston — together at Muzzleloader's and More for an alleged attempted robbery remains to be uncovered. What they have in common is in their arrest records. Montez, Romine and Spalinger each have been arrested on prior drug charges related to methamphetamine, ranging in severity from possession to intent to manufacture or delivery. "I can share that (Montez and Romine) made themselves unavailable to supervision and had warrants for their arrest at the time of this incident," Dale Primmer, director of the Umatilla County Community Corrections, said in an email.

Montez, 36, has the most extensive criminal history of the group. He was released from the Oregon Department of Correction in May 2020 after being convicted in Umatilla County on charges of delivery of methamphetamine and felon in possession of a weapon.

According to Umatilla County Community Corrections, Montez started his "first custody cycle" in 2005. A custody cycle is the period during which an offender begins incarceration and is under supervision of community corrections until dismissed.

This means that since 2005 when he was convicted for possession of a controlled substance, Montez has continuously been in some form of community-based supervision — probation or post-prison supervision — or in local jail or prison. During the past nearly 17 years, he has been convicted in Oregon

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CHIEF JOSEPH DAYS

Tribal encampment plays a key role in Wallowa County's premier summer event



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain, File

🚩 Riders from the Nez Perce Tribe join the Chief Joseph Days Grand Parade in their ancestral homeland of the Wallowa Valley on Saturday, July 31, 2021.

An honored tradition

By KATY NESBITT
For the Wallowa County Chieftain

JOSEPH — Chief Joseph Days Rodeo is a mashup of Western culture with both roping and riding action in the Harley Tucker Arena as well as the dancing, singing and feasting of the tribal encampment.

In the "old days," according to Ralph Swinehart, there were 200 tepees on the rodeo grounds during Chief Joseph Days. Slowly the tribal members stopped coming.

"In 1986 it trickled down to only three tepees," Swinehart said.

In 1988, Swinehart said, a couple Wallowa County residents — Steve

"We are putting out the word for anyone to get involved, especially young people."

— Ralph Swinehart

Zollman and Bruce Womack — went to visit Nez Perce descendants of the Wallowa Band on the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation and the Nez Perce Indian Reservation to ask why they were no longer coming. They were told they were not invited.

"Bruce and Steve got together with Milley Fraser and welcomed them back,"

Swinehart said.

Tribal members from the Nez Perce Reservation in Lapwai, Idaho, May Taylor and Horace Axtell, as well as Soy RedThunder from Nespelem, Washington, on the Colville Reservation, and Priscilla and Fernmore Craig from the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation restarted it.

Swinehart said Don and Rosemary Green from Wallowa County and the Craigs brought fish and organized a potluck that now feeds hundreds of people a year.

Jean Pekarek has been volunteering at the friendship feast as long as Swinehart.

"In 1988, I got word that there were going to be some tribal people bringing salmon, and people in the community wanted to come and bring side dishes," Pekarek said. "I went, and as the years went on, it started growing."

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Ellen Morris Bishop/Contributed Photo, File
Chief Joseph Days is a major event for Wallowa County, drawing locals and visitors alike.

Planning for the best Chief Joseph Days

76th annual event kicks off Wednesday, July 27, in Joseph

By JACK PARRY
Wallowa County Chieftain

JOSEPH — Chief Joseph Days is a major event for Wallowa County, drawing locals and visitors alike. So, who better to ask how to get the most out of it than some Chief Joseph Days veterans.

Chief Joseph Days Office Manager Miranda Tickner thinks it's best for people to show up an hour before the rodeo starts.

"It's best usually to arrive at the rodeo grounds around 6 p.m. because that's when the gates open to our grandstands, and we have a preshow going on until 7 p.m. when the rodeo starts," she said.

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Wallowa County Chieftain, File

🚩 A bronc rider hangs on during a previous Chief Joseph Days rodeo. This year's rodeo will be July 27-31, 2022, in Joseph.



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WEATHER Full forecast on the back of B section

Tonight
60 Low
Clear

HOT

Wednesday
101/65
Very hot

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