

2 murder suspects in custody, 3rd on the lam

On Jan. 9, 2018, Damian Lee Atwood was taken into custody by detectives from the Oregon State Police Criminal Investigations Division and lodged in the Josephine County Jail on the warrant for the June 22, 2017 murder of 22-year-old John Reitterer from Crescent City. Reitterer was located in a shallow creek off of Illinois River Road, near milepost 6. The death of Reitterer was determined to be a homicide

and the investigation has been ongoing since that time. On Nov. 28, 2017, the completed investigation was presented to a Josephine County Grand Jury. The Josephine County Grand Jury indicted three people with the charge of murder and warrants were issued for their arrests. Atwood along with Ryan Michael Eldred are in custody and the third suspect Elizabeth “Little Red” Hudson is still on the run.

The Oregon State Police as are asking for the public’s help in locating her. If you have any information regarding her whereabouts, you are asked to call the Oregon State Police Dispatch Center at 541-664-4600.



Hudson (clockwise from left), Atwood and Eldred

Supreme Court hearing 2 vehicle search cases

Jessica Gresko
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) - Terrence Byrd was driving his fiancée’s rental car on a Pennsylvania highway when a state trooper pulled him over for an alleged minor traffic violation. He acted nervously during the stop, at one point telling troopers he had a marijuana cigarette in the car, and officers eventually asked to search the vehicle.

But because the rental agreement didn’t authorize Byrd to drive the gray Ford Fusion, troopers told him they didn’t actually need his consent for the search. And when troopers opened the trunk, they found body armor and about 2,500 little bags of heroin. Byrd later acknowledged he planned to sell the drugs for roughly \$7,000, and a court sentenced him to 10 years in prison.

On Tuesday, the Supreme Court heard argument in two vehicle search cases including Byrd’s. His attorneys argue his case has potential consequences for the 115 million car rentals that take place annually in the United States. They say that if the government wins, police will have an incentive to pull over a rental car driver who commits a traffic violation because police will know they can search the car if the driver isn’t on the rental agreement.

The court’s decision has the potential to impact, in particular, low-income Americans, a significant portion of car renters, and black and Hispanic drivers, who are more likely to rent

cars than white drivers, according to the American Civil Liberties Union and the National Association of Criminal Defense lawyers, who filed a brief in the case.

Byrd tried to get the evidence from the search excluded from his case. But a court ruled that because Byrd was an unauthorized driver of the car he had no reasonable expectation of privacy in the car and therefore couldn’t challenge the search using the Fourth Amendment, which protects against unreasonable searches. The Trump administration and courts in several parts of the country agree that’s the right outcome. Other courts disagree.

Byrd’s lawyers say rulings like the one against him mean police can conduct a search whenever they stop a rental car being driven by an unauthorized user, even if they don’t believe they will find evidence of a crime in the car.

On Tuesday, the Supreme Court wrestled with how to resolve the case. Chief Justice John Roberts and Justice Samuel Alito seemed inclined to side with the government. But other justices seemed sympathetic to Byrd or were struggling with how to craft a rule that would be easy to apply.

Justice Stephen Breyer told Byrd’s attorney Robert M. Loeb that Fourth Amendment law is, in a sense, “too complicated already.”

“What worries me is what’s our rule going to be?” he said. Breyer later told attorney Eric J. Feigin, arguing for the government, “I’m looking for something simple.”

Byrd’s case dates to 2014, when his fiancée Latasha Reed, with whom

he has five children, rented a car from a Budget rental office in New Jersey. The government disputes their relationship, calling her Byrd’s girlfriend, but both sides agree that the rental agreement limited the car’s drivers to Reed, a spouse, co-workers on company business or anyone else who signed an additional form at the time of the rental, though no one did.

Even so, Reed handed over the keys as soon as she left the rental office and Byrd drove the car. He was later pulled over while driving alone near Harrisburg. The reasons the trooper who pulled him over gave for finding Byrd’s driving suspicious: he was driving with his hands placed as most people are taught to drive, at 10 and 2 on the wheel; his seat was positioned far from the steering wheel; he was driving a rental car and he spent too long in the left lane making a passing maneuver.

The second case the court heard Tuesday involves a Virginia man who was arrested after a police officer walked onto his driveway and pulled back a tarp covering a stolen motorcycle. Virginia’s highest court found the officer’s actions proper.

New art installation at the I.V. Library

Cave Junction, OR, Jan. 8, 2018—The community is invited to celebrate newly installed artwork designed by brother-sister duo Wild Cloud Creative during an open house between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 20 in the children’s library at the Illinois Valley branch of Josephine Community Library District (JCLD), 209 W Palmer Street, Cave Junction.

“It’s exciting for children to be exposed to inspiring local art in our public spaces,” said JCLD Illinois Valley Branch Manager Roberta Lee.

In celebration of the new grant-funded permanent art installation, storytime for the whole family will take place at noon and refreshments and a special art craft will be provided all day.

New multimedia artwork by Wild Cloud Creative was made possible by a grant from the Josephine County Cultural Coalition. To learn more about Wild Cloud Creative, visit www.wildcloudcreative.com or www.be.net/lucas_brinkerhoff.

For more information about the Illinois Valley open house, call JCLD Illinois Valley Branch Manager Roberta Lee at 541-592-4778, or email rllee@josephinelibrary.org.

The work of Oregon based artists Jessilyn and Lucas Brinkerhoff of Wild Cloud Creative can be found under the Interstate-5 overpass in Medford at Hawthorne Park, throughout Eugene, and in the skyline of Downtown Tacoma, Washington.

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