



SPRINGFIELD POLICE
ARREST JIMMY MARR

PHOTO: JENNEFER HARPER

ARREST OF RACIST TRIGGERS FREE SPEECH DEBATE

Many of those participating in a Stop Hate! rally in Springfield Sept. 29 were greeted by a loudspeaker blaring from the roof of the home of well-known racist and anti-Semite Jimmy Marr. Marr was blasting a speech proclaiming the wonders of hate. He was arrested for disorderly conduct in the second degree.

Marr's arrest has spurred a public debate on freedom of speech, with some questioning if Marr was arrested for hate speech, which is not a crime. However, Springfield police Sgt. Brian Humphreys says, "Marr was arrested for disorderly conduct 2 (state statute) based on making 'unreasonable noise' and his intentions to 'disturb a lawful assembly' as defined by statute."

The permitted rally, put on by the Community Alliance of Lane County, Standing Up for Racial Justice and the NAACP as well as the Springfield Alliance for Equality and Respect outside Willamalane Center, was "in reaction to increasing levels of racist, xenophobic, homophobic, Islamophobic, anti-Semitic and classist activity happening in Lane County," the Community Alliance of Lane County said in its notice about the rally.

"There have been more Confederate flags seen in the area, vandalism targeting Asian owned businesses, a truck driving around with neo-Nazi and white supremacist messages on it and more," CALC noted.

Marr is the owner and driver of the truck, a Toyota Tacoma emblazoned with neo-Nazi messages (he offensively refers to it as a "rice burner" on his Twitter posts). He has made himself notorious over the years, appearing to seek headlines and attention, with messages such as "Diversity is white genocide," "Trump: Do the white thing," "Jew lies matter" and more. His Twitter handle is @genocideJimmy.

Jennefer Harper, a CodePink activist, took photos of the arrest and says she was walking to the rally when she encountered Marr's house where he was blasting offensive speech such as "hate is good" from a loudspeaker on his roof. Harper has identified the speech as the words of white nationalist Kai Murros, "On Hate."

According to the Springfield Police Department, "In retaliation to the gathering, Marr installed a very large amplified speaker on the rooftop of his area home. Marr then played a pro-hatred message on a loop, which repeated itself upon conclusion.

The amplified message of hate could be heard for several blocks, attracting approximately 30 people who were upset by the volume of the recording, including many of Marr's neighbors and members of the assembly."

After "repeated attempts to contact Marr at his residence" without success, the Springfield Fire Department assisted officers with the removal of the speaker from Marr's roof, SPD said. Marr then left his house and told police that he was "trying to get his message out to people." He was subsequently arrested.

Local attorney Mike Arnold, known for his initial representation of Malheur occupier Ammon Bundy, reached out to Marr on Twitter, offering to represent him, "You are POS [piece of shit] for views but disorderly conduct is unconst[itutional] for words w/o actions," Arnold wrote. "Call for pro bono help."

Arnold is now representing Marr. Arnold tells EW that referring to Marr as POS in his tweet is "not the client acquisition technique favored by most lawyers," but says that is the point of the case — the issue is the fundamental right to freedom of speech, not whether one likes what he says, adding that he despises Marr's views.

He says his firm was criticized for offering to defend Bundy pro bono as well "because people disagree with him," but he says it is an attorney's duty to represent unpopular defenses. "Knowing Lane County, this is about as unpopular as it gets," he says. He adds, "I fear a Trump regime. We don't get to pick and choose which constitutional right that we like."

Arnold says hate is best defeated not by restricting someone's speech — saying it was likely the content of the speech Marr was playing that led to his arrest. "The only remedy for hateful speech like this is more speech; it's uncomfortable living in a democracy sometimes."

Longtime activist Alley Valkyrie, one of many to weigh in on the free speech issue on social media, tells EW, "I don't think that a racist's 'right to free speech' in public should be more important than the right of marginalized people to not live in fear." She says, "Hate speech is a form of violence."

Humphreys of the Springfield police says of Marr's arrest, "The nature of his recording, while obnoxious and offensive to many on scene, was not influential."

SLANT

- **Great egrets with their all-white plumage** are drifting back into the Willamette Valley for the winter. We see them around Fern Ridge, in oaks and wetlands along the Long Tom River, about the same size as the great blue heron. Wildlife biologists tell us more have been coming here, but they don't know why. Plume hunting for women's hats nearly wiped out this beautiful bird, but the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1913 saved them.

- "Talk, talk, talk," as Chuck Sheketoff put it, has been the only solution put forward in Oregon since Measure 5, the property tax limitation passed some 25 years ago, did such damage to public education and social services. He was speaking to the City Club of Eugene on Sept. 30 in **defense of Ballot Measure 97**, which goes up or down in next month's election. A founder of the Oregon Center for Public Policy, Sheketoff says no better proposal has come forward yet and none is in sight. He mentioned the hours of talk former governor John Kitzhaber sponsored in Mahonia Hall with no real tax reform resulting. Paul Nicholson, bike shop owner and former Eugene City Council member, spoke against 97, calling it "badly drafted ... we need better legislation." Like Chuck and the legislators we respect, we're tired of talk. We're ready to vote.



- **Creepy clowns?** They've reached the Northwest, or we've been told, just in time for Halloween. Eugene police sent out a press release recently saying the cops "have been getting media calls regarding the national stories about 'creepy clowns,' and are aware of information online at #Wenotclowninaround." EPD says, "Police are also aware of concerns from the public regarding clown sightings in Oregon, but have not received information to suggest that there is a credible threat in Eugene."

- The good news on **climate change**: the European Union voted to approve the Paris accord, meaning that the agreement can now seek to limit greenhouse gas emissions and keep global temperature increases "well below" 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 Fahrenheit). The bad news: Climate Central, an independent association of scientists and journalists, just announced that we passed a point of no return. Atmospheric carbon levels have permanently passed 400 parts per million, and it looks like they won't go down to more friendly levels "ever again for the indefinite future."

- **Eugene Mayor Kitty Piercy** is leaving office after 12 years, and her years of service to the city and also in the Oregon Legislature were recognized in the U.S. Senate Sept. 14. Sen. Jeff Merkley addressed President Obama in his remarks, saying, "I have been particularly impressed by her work to save our environment." He goes on to note her work on environmental justice, sustainability and climate change — Eugene has reduced its city carbon emissions by 10 percent, Merkley says. He concludes, "We need more leaders like Mayor Kitty Piercy in office. I thank Mayor Piercy for her hard work and dedication to public service and wish her the best in her well-deserved retirement." It's good to see moments of sweetness in a political climate that is otherwise so toxic. Read Merkley's full remarks in the Congressional Record here goo.gl/atLcCR.

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