



**DERRICK JENSEN PAUSES  
IN HIS READING AT THE  
LIBRARY AS PROTESTERS  
DECRY HIS STANCE ON  
TRANS PEOPLE**

## CONTROVERSIAL SPEAKER SPARKS OUTCRY

*Protest leads to arrest at Eugene Library*

Once known as a “philosopher poet” among environmentalists, Derrick Jensen of the group Deep Green Resistance is better known these days for sparking protests against what his opponents call his and DGR’s transphobic views.

Jensen’s March 4 appearance at the Eugene Public Library led to a protest and one arrest.

According to the Eugene Police department, “Twenty to 30 people began protesting an environmentalist speaker, whose views the group found offensive to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer (LGBTQ) community.” Protest organizers say of the 150 people they counted at the library, 90-100 were protesters.

EPD refers to the talk at the library as a “free speech event.” The library did not sponsor the event; Jensen rented the room at the public facility.

Daniel Williams, the person arrested, says he became aware of Jensen through the organization United Front: Families Resisting and Organizing Nonviolently Together, which organized the protest.

United Front wrote on its Facebook event page that DGR and Jensen “promote extreme bigotry against transgender people. For example Jensen has compared transgender people’s personal medical decisions to the Eugenics movement and the Holocaust.”

In response to an opinion piece criticizing Jensen and DGR by local anarcho-primitivist John Zerzan that *EW* ran online, one Jensen supporter, who did not provide a name, writes that all transwomen are “just shitty, sexist men.”

Jensen and DGR have taken the stance that women-only spaces should not allow the presence of women-identifying trans people. Previous talks by Jensen and other DGR members have met with fierce opposition and protest in Eugene and elsewhere. Jensen positions himself as a victim of free-speech attacks and a supporter of women.

Jensen writes on his DGR blog that, before the event, he was “was forced to hire security from a private local security firm” due to the hostility he was experiencing. Jensen had previously been invited to give a talk through the Western Environmental Law Center during the Public Interest Environmental Law Conference, but WELC withdrew its invitation or, as Jensen prefers to call it, “deplatformed” him.

Williams says the event at Eugene library was completely nonviolent. He says he attended as an ally to those in the community affected by Jensen’s views, and when he arrived he sat down and turned his back to Jensen and began quietly reading. Jensen himself was reading from his previously published material, Williams says.

According to Williams, Jensen did not address the topic of the protest and is “completely unapologetic about thinking trans-people don’t have a right to exist in society.”

Williams says EPD told the protesters the police were there to make sure the speech wasn’t disrupted.

Jensen says in a statement that “the reactionary left of Eugene did its best to shut down public discourse. They failed miserably.” He says he gave his full talk and it was “livestreamed to thousands of people, to much acclaim.”

Williams says at one point Jensen paused after he finished reading a science fiction story, and during that pause Williams turned to the person next to him and quietly commented on the sci-fi story he himself was reading. At that point Williams says DGR supporters began to yell and point, and he was arrested shortly thereafter.

In its media release EPD says Williams “wished to be arrested, passively resisted and so was accommodated with a citation in lieu of custody for criminal trespass 2.”

Williams says, “I did not go in with the intention of being arrested, and my intention was to sit quietly throughout the whole thing, and when the person paused, I simply made a comment.”

He muses, “It seems like I was arrested for talking about a book in the library.” ■

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