

BY MICHAEL TOBIN

ECO-SABOTEUR CAPTURED AFTER 12-YEAR RUN

Critics denounce government rhetoric as biased

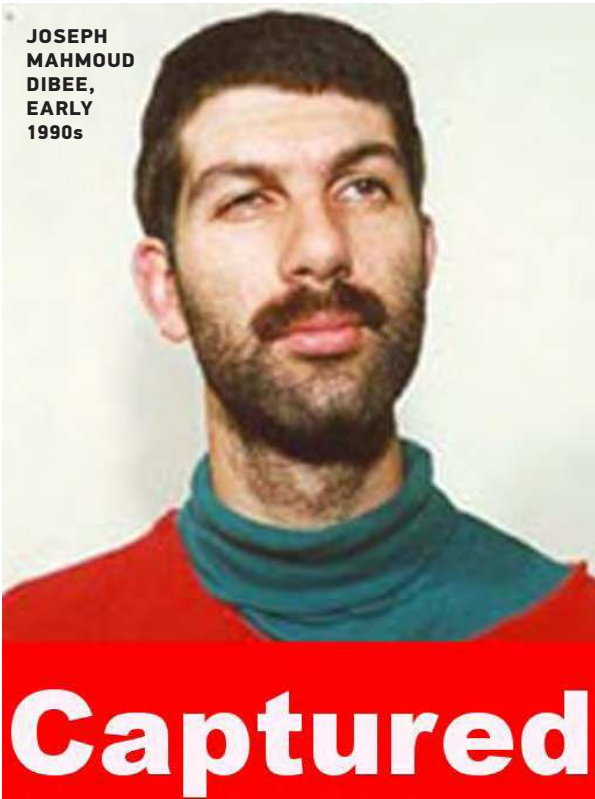
Cuban authorities apprehended a Seattle man on Friday, Aug. 10, after he had been on the run for 12 years from a 2006 indictment that linked him and 12 other co-defendants to a string of ecologically motivated arsons across the Pacific Northwest.

Federal prosecutors indicted Joseph Mahmoud Dibee and 12 others in 2006 on charges of conspiracy to commit arson and dozens of counts of arson. In a long and self-congratulatory press release from the District of Oregon's U.S. Attorney's Office, the government said that Dibee was travelling through Central America with the end destination of Russia, but made a stop in Cuba, where he was detained by Cuban authorities.

Critics of the government's case say that Dibee and his co-defendants are victims of the "Green Scare," or as the Civil Liberties Defense Center defines the term, "the government's unconstitutional attack on environmental and animal rights activists" as it labels the eco-saboteurs "terrorists."

"As usual, the state is using terrorism rhetoric to attempt to bias the judicial process against individuals accused of property damage crimes that were not intended and did not cause harm to any humans or animals," Lauren Regan, the director of the Civil Liberties Defense Center writes in a press release.

The government repeatedly referred to Dibee as a "domestic terrorist" in its press release.



JOSEPH
MAHMOUD
DIBEE,
EARLY
1990s

PHOTO COURTESY FBI.GOV

Arson was the primary tactic of the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) as well as the Animal Liberation Front, to which the sabotage was attributed, and no one was physically harmed in any of the fires. Rebecca Rubin, who was sentenced to five years in prison in January 2014 and was the most recent co-defendant sentenced, released wild horses that were being held for slaughter at an Oregon Bureau of Land Management facility as well as one in California. Other co-defendants in 2007 received sentences between a little over three years to 12 years.

In an unlikely partnership, Cuban authorities helped return Dibee to the United States. According to the government press release, he will face charges in Oregon, Washington and California.

The scope of the eco-saboteurs' actions listed in the indictment was vast, and the government says that Dibee and the other co-conspirators caused at least \$45 million in damages between 1995 and 2001. According to the indictment, in addition to freeing wild horses and burning a horse slaughterhouse, the actions included arsons in Eugene at the Childers Meat company in 1999, at Romania SUV lot in 2001 and the attempted arson of a Eugene Police Department substation near the University of Oregon campus in 2000. Many of those indicted had Eugene ties.

Dibee made an appearance in an Oregon district court on Friday where a U.S. magistrate judge granted the government's request that he be detained. ■

SLANT

• **We are not the enemy.** On Aug. 16, more than 200 newspapers across the United States, led by *The Boston Globe*, have signed on to run separate but simultaneous editorials condemning President Donald Trump's ongoing attacks on the news media.

We agree. The outgoing United Nations human rights commissioner, Zeid Ra'ad al-Husseini, says the president's words are "very close to incitement to violence." Trump's incessant threats are a real danger, not just to the people who write, photograph, edit and deliver the news — but to democracy itself.

• On that note, newsprint prices are soaring thanks to Trump administration tariffs (also a story in this week's edition), but that won't stop us from printing this free paper. We do have some online extras though, so don't miss EW's online coverage of a \$4.5 million synthetic weed civil forfeiture case and other news updates. And take a minute to thank the advertisers who keep us in print **despite Trump's best efforts to kill the media.**

• David Rogers, impressive executive director of the Oregon chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union, told us in a recent visit to Eugene that the Oregon staff has doubled in the last year and a half to 16 or 17 people. We all know that **civil liberties are under attack in the age of Trump**, probably more than any other time in the 63-year history of the ACLU in Oregon. The president is setting the example. As we said last week, "Hurry up, Mueller." **What can we do right now?** Check out our story on political postcards in the news section this week.

• **Push-polling is already trying to influence the November midterm elections.** We recently received a phone call asking for two minutes to answer a few questions on the Oregon governor's race. The questions subtly tried to educate in favor of Knute Buehler and away from Kate Brown. Add that rhetorical device to the TV ads that have been running for weeks, and it's going to be a long race with many millions of dollars spent before our ballots are cast in November. Go Kate!



AN ASSHOLE WITH WINGS

PHOTO COURTESY OPO TERSER / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

• We know it's **neither kind nor tree-huggery to call yellowjackets assholes with wings**, but seriously, while we appreciate that they have a beneficial role in the environment feeding on insects like caterpillars that eat your garden, it really feels like they are out to get us right now. According to a press release from the Oregon State University Extension Service, they kind of are out to get us, or at least are hanging out pretty close to humans these days. OSU says drought conditions are bringing more yellowjackets to your garden looking for water. They also caution against getting too crazy with wasp sprays — wasps are being driven by the drought to eat pollen, as bees do, and you may take out the pollinating bees. Use wasp traps near places like dining areas, keep garbage covered and fallen fruit picked up, and be careful around water where they might hang out, OSU says.