

Man gets community service for arson fire that destroyed Redmond meatpacking plant

BY MAXINE BERNSTEIN

The Oregonian

A federal judge Tuesday sentenced eco-saboteur Joseph M. Dibee to community service, rejecting the government's call for a seven-year-plus prison term for the Seattle man who was a fugitive for more than a decade before he pleaded guilty to committing two arsons in Oregon and California including a Redmond meatpacking plant.

"I'm truly sorry for all the events that have happened. I haven't been involved in this type of activity for many years," Dibee, 54, told U.S. District Judge Ann Aiken, appearing by video for his sentencing in federal court in Eugene. "I've moved on with my life. It was a mistake many years ago — many, many years ago — and I paid a really heavy price for it."

Assistant U.S. Attorney Quinn Harrington urged a prison term of seven years and three months, arguing Dibee shouldn't be "rewarded with a lower sentence after fleeing accountability."

At the time of his arsons, Dibee was highly educated with a supportive family, yet he took more of a leadership role in igniting fires when some of his co-defendants served more as lookouts, Harrington said.

Defense lawyer Matthew Schindler argued for a sentence of time-served — the two years and five months Dibee was in jail before his pretrial release. During his time in custody, Dibee suffered a broken jaw from an assault by a white supremacist that has left him permanently disfigured and was the first to contract COVID-19 in Multnomah County's Inverness Jail, his lawyer said. "He served an entire 29 months that were just incredibly harsh and difficult," Schindler said.

Aiken, who has been with the case since the beginning about three decades ago, said she believed Dibee has recognized his wrongs. She remains impressed with how he's working now to use his "incredible engineering skills" to help Indigenous tribes in Alaska, she said.



A federal judge sentenced eco-saboteur Joseph Dibee to community service Tuesday for helping set fire to the Cavel West meatpacking plant in Redmond in July 1997. The plant, seen here during the investigation of the fire, never reopened.

Dibee has been working with The Native Conservancy Project, a community nonprofit, to help track kelp production yields in Indigenous ocean communities. The kelp farming is intended to provide the communities with a stable protein source and added income as salmon runs have dramatically fallen from overfishing and climate change, according to Dibee and his lawyer.

The judge said she hopes Dibee uses this time as an opportunity to "be a contributor to the greater good" and show younger people "how to make change through the rule of law."

"You have demonstrated you have learned lessons, although belatedly," Aiken said.

She ordered that he complete 1,000 hours of community service in the next three years and pay about \$1.3 million in restitution, an amount shared by his co-defendants.

Dibee, a fugitive for 12 years who was finally tracked down in Cuba in Au-

gust 2018, pleaded guilty in April to two counts of conspiracy to commit arson and one count of arson in a string of attacks that destroyed or damaged environmental targets in Oregon and California more than two decades ago. He was held in Cuba based on an Interpol notice reporting U.S. arrest warrants and turned over to FBI agents.

Federal investigators said Dibee was part of the largest group of eco-saboteurs ever taken down by the FBI. They called themselves "The Family" — more than a dozen people who committed crimes in the name of the Earth Liberation Front and Animal Liberation Front — and caused an estimated \$40 million in damage from 1996 to 2005.

He's the 12th person to be sentenced in the case. One remains a fugitive, Josephine Sunshine Overaker, who is still listed on a FBI terrorism most wanted list. The sentences of his co-defendants have ranged from just over three years to 13 years in prison.

Dibee pleaded guilty to engaging

in a conspiracy to set fire to government buildings and destroy other property, driven by "ideology, and as part of direct actions," from October 1996 through December 2005, according to Harrington.

Dibee also pleaded guilty to arson tied to a fire he helped set at the Cavel West Inc. meatpacking plant in Redmond in July 1997 and to conspiracy to commit arson in a fire at the U.S. Bureau of Land Management's wild horse corrals near Litchfield, California, in October 2001.

The judge said she weighed Dibee's decision to flee the country to escape his indictment. She also considered that Dibee suffered "extraordinary collateral consequences" from what his lawyer called Dibee's torture in Cuba, his attack in jail followed by "inappropriate negligent medical care" that resulted in untreated facial fractures as well as his contracting of COVID-19.

Aiken said she believed Dibee was a changed man. Schindler and Dibee's

prior defense lawyer have said Dibee is now seeking to effect change through the research and development of better environmental practices that would financially benefit companies.

The prosecution of the case, Aiken said, was pivotal in impressing upon environmental activists the importance of "not using anger and violence as a weapon for change."

She also acknowledged that in society to this day, "people are taking decisions into their own hands and acting out in ways that are both criminal and inappropriate and dangerous."

Before issuing her sentence, she quoted South African anti-apartheid activist Nelson Mandela: "Great anger and violence can never build a nation."

The buildings at Cavel West were destroyed, with the loss estimated to exceed the insured value of \$1.2 million, according to court records. The fire was designed to end the processing of meat from wild horses slaughtered by the plant.

A co-conspirator recruited Dibee to help plan and burn down Cavel West after meeting him at a protest. Dibee scouted out the location and then reported back that they'd need more people. On July 20, 1997, Dibee and a crew returned to Cavel West, wearing dark clothing, masks and gloves.

Dibee brought timers he created and a fuel mixture. He drilled holes into the building to pour flammable gel into, stuffed rags into the holes and placed buckets under the rags. One of three explosive devices ignited prematurely, the building caught fire and he and others fled.

They all ran back to a van, drove to the staging area, took off their clothes, shoes, masks and gloves and put them in a previously dug hole, poured muriatic acid on them and covered the hole with dirt, according to prosecutors.

Four years later in California, Dibee helped destroy the Bureau of Land Management's wild horse corrals. Prosecutors said he played a significant role in drawing accomplices from Canada and hosting them at his house in Seattle, where they built explosives. One co-defendant said Dibee suggested Litchfield as a target.

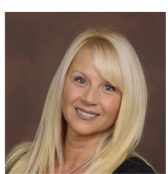
The Big 3—for a Big Zero

\$0 premiums, \$0 copays at your doctor and \$0 copays for many prescriptions

With Humana Gold Plus H2486-009 (HMO), your monthly premium is \$0. Your primary care physician (PCP) copay is \$0. And you pay \$0 copays for Tier 1 and Tier 2 prescription drugs.* This plan delivers savings—and benefits designed to support your whole health and help you reach your goals, such as:

- No referral required to see in-network specialists
- Dental, hearing and vision coverage
- \$30 over-the-counter allowance every three months

Call a licensed Humana sales agent



DORI FRITSCH
360-823-8497 (TTY: 711)
Monday – Friday
8 a.m. – 5 p.m.
dfritsch1@humana.com
humana.com/dfritsch
Fb.me/dori.fritsch1

Humana. A more human way to healthcare™

* For 90-day mail delivery. The \$0 copay applies to Tier 1 and Tier 2 medications using a mail-delivery pharmacy with preferred cost sharing after any applicable deductible is met.

* Available only through participating retailers and Humana's mail-order pharmacy, CenterWell Pharmacy™. Allowance amounts cannot be combined. Limitations and restrictions may apply. Always consult with your doctor or medical provider before taking over-the-counter medications.

Humana is a Medicare Advantage HMO organization with a Medicare contract. Enrollment in any Humana plan depends on contract renewal. Applicable to Humana Gold Plus H2486-009 (HMO). **At Humana, it is important you are treated fairly.** Humana Inc. and its subsidiaries comply with applicable federal civil rights laws and do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, ancestry, ethnicity, marital status, religion or language. **English:** ATTENTION: If you do not speak English, language assistance services, free of charge, are available to you. Call 1-877-320-1235 (TTY: 711). **Español (Spanish):** ATENCIÓN: Si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 1-877-320-1235 (TTY: 711). **繁體中文 (Chinese):** 注意: 如果您使用繁體中文, 您可以免費獲得語言援助服務。請致電 1-877-320-1235 (聽障專線: 711)。

Y0040_GHHJFD5TE_23_AD_M

Elect Jay Patrick



★★★★ 4 Mayor of Redmond

My primary goal as mayor is to "Keep Redmond, Redmond." Growth is happening but there are ways to manage that growth, to hold on to the heart of Redmond.

We must continue to keep the qualities, character, and our value system strong.

There are multiple projects planned that will keep Redmond moving forward:

- Constructing voter approved police/safety building
- Sewer plant renovation
- Airport terminal expansion
- Highway 97 improvements from Veterans Way to Yew Avenue
- Partnering with all stakeholders to ensure school safety

Growth mandates that we prioritize planning for safety, communication, water, sewer, economic development, livability, infrastructure and our stewardship while maintaining our personality. I bring leadership, transparency, and perseverance to this position. I trust we share in the many values that Redmond holds; that is what has brought us together, and together we will make a difference for generations to come.

I have fond memories of growing up in Redmond. I graduated from Redmond High School, finished my associates degree at COCC and married my best friend.

I've devoted 23 years balancing serving on city council while working with technology for a school district. I've been involved in construction projects for city hall, Deschutes County Fairgrounds, Redmond airport terminal, Highway 97 bypass, multiple street projects, Centennial Park, Hope Playground, and Maple Street Bridge. These projects have developed relationships and insights on how to approach future proposals to ensure the best outcomes. Let's move Redmond into the future together.

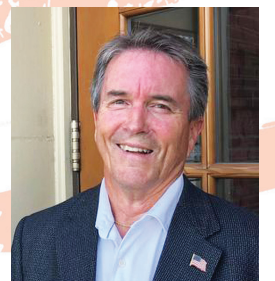
Endorsements:

Ron Bryant, Former Mayor
Jerry Thackery Former Mayor
Gene Whisnant, Former State Representative
Curt Nitschelm, Veterinarian
Linda Swearingen, Former County Commissioner
Tom Wright, Wright Ford
Nancy Blankenship, Former County Clerk
Joe Lochner, Insurance

Mike McIntosh, Former School Superintendent
Barry Campbell, Pastor
Elton Gregory, Former School Superintendent
Dolly Gregory, Educator
Mercedes Cook-Bostick, RAPRD Director
Kristy Cross, One Street Down

Elect Jay Patrick 4 Mayor

www.JayPatrick4Mayor.com



Paid for by Jay Patrick 4 Redmond Mayor