

Alleged poachers in Washington face new charges in Oregon

Some hunters are charged in Clatsop County

By GABRIELLE KAROL KOIN

PORTLAND — A bust of one of the largest poaching rings in Washington state history has led to charges for its alleged members across the border in Oregon.

The Clackamas County district attorney filed misdemeanor charges last week against William Jarred Haynes, 24; David McLeskey, 59; Aaron Brian Hendricks, 35; and Joseph Allen Dills, 31.

The charges allege that McLeskey and Hendricks illegally used dogs to hunt black bears or cougars in June 2016. McLeskey, Haynes, and Dills are charged with illegally using dogs to hunt and kill a bear in July 2017; the three



Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

A poaching ring operated in Washington state and Oregon.

men face an additional misdemeanor for wasting the bear.

The four men are part of a larger ring of at least nine alleged poachers who have

been charged in Washington state with illegally hunting and killing animals, including bears and bobcats. Washington Department of Fish

and Wildlife Capt. Jeff Wickersham said they have already been charged in Skamania, Cowlitz, Lewis, Jefferson and Pacific counties.

In addition to the new charges in Clackamas County, Haynes, McLeskey, Hendricks, and Dills also face misdemeanor charges in Clatsop County. They have pleaded not guilty to crimes involving the illegal killing of bobcats in 2016. McLeskey and Dills will be arraigned later this month in Lincoln County on additional charges regarding the killing of a bear using dogs.

Two other men associated with the ring, Eddy Dills and Kyle Manley, were also charged in Clatsop County. Eddy Dills has pleaded not guilty to misdemeanor charges related to the illegal killing of animals. Manley was convicted of violating wildlife permit requirements and was fined \$95, according to court records.

Digital evidence, including text messages and cell-phone photos and videos, helped law enforcement

agencies' investigation into the poaching ring. According to documents filed in Lincoln County, search warrants yielded photos with a Google map link location and texts regarding illegal hunts, placing the men in Lincoln County.

In October, Deputy Chief Mike Cenci of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife police told KOIN that he almost vomited when he discovered the extent of the killings.

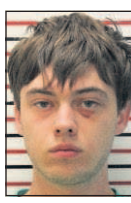
"It made me sick to my stomach," he said at the time. Cenci has since retired.

Questions remain about motive — and the decision to share texts, photos and videos of the killings.

"This I don't understand, and I don't think I'll ever understand it," Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Sgt. Brad Rhoden said in October. "I don't think they'll be able to explain that."

Astoria man convicted for his role in robbery

By JACK HEFFERNAN
The Daily Astorian



Samuel Kitto

An Astoria man who severely injured a New York state official in a 2013 crash was convicted Thursday and sentenced to five years of probation for violating terms of post-prison supervision.

The latest conviction stems from an incident in January in which a Portland man allegedly robbed the Mini Mart on Marine Drive.

Samuel Kitto, now 24, was driving home on U.S. Highway 26 from a rave in 2013 when the car collided head-on with a Toyota Corolla, causing numerous serious injuries. Audrey Zibelman, chairwoman of the New York Public Service Commission at the time, was a front-seat passenger in the Toyota and underwent 14 surgeries after the crash.

A blood sample exhibited during trial revealed Kitto had drugs in his system, leading to convictions for driving under the

influence and five counts of assault. Kitto was sentenced to 4 1/2 years in prison, and his license was suspended for a period of time after his release from prison.

In January, Kevin Patrick Kely, 27, and Kitto were sitting in a car about 2:30 a.m. after being denied alcohol at the Mini Mart. Kely allegedly went back into the store, walked out with beer without paying and attacked an employee who tried to stop him. He pleaded guilty earlier this month to third-degree theft and was sentenced to 10 days

in jail.

Video footage from the incident revealed Kitto put keys in the car's ignition, started it and rolled it backward from the parking spot. He was charged with felony driving while suspended, for which he was sentenced Thursday.

"You know you shouldn't have been driving that vehicle even if it only moved a few inches, right?" Judge Paula

Brownhill asked Kitto at the sentencing hearing. "What were you thinking?"

Mary Ann Murk, Kitto's court-appointed attorney, gave Brownhill a number of support letters written on her client's behalf prior to sentencing. Kitto said he is employed and engaged to be married.

If Kitto is found in violation of his probation, he has agreed to serve 2 1/2 years in prison.

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- Walter Trumbull
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- Bill Van Nostran
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- Robert Adams
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