

Former Oregon Ducks star wrestles armed suspect to ground

By JIM RYAN
The Oregonian

Parkrose High School's football coach wrestled a suspect to the ground Friday amid a report of a man with a gun near the northeast Portland school.

No one was hurt. Parents and students reported Coach Keanon Lowe, one of Oregon's most prominent high school and college football players of the past decade, tackled the armed male suspect, who was later taken into custody.

"I'm just happy every-

one was OK," Lowe said as he walked out of the school's stand-alone Fine Arts building into a school parking lot. "I'm happy I was able to be there for the kids and for the community."

He said he was tired and wanted to go home to his loved ones. Several people greeted him in the parking lot. Two men shook Lowe's hand and one woman hugged him and told him, "Thank you."

Lowe, also Parkrose's head track and field coach, apparently works as a security guard at the school.

Police said there are no

additional suspects.

Senior Alexa Pope said she was in her government class in the Fine Arts building when Lowe came in looking for a senior classmate, an 18-year-old male student, who wasn't there.

About 10 minutes before the end of class, the student appeared in the doorway in a black trench coat and pulled out a long gun from beneath his coat, said senior Justyn Wilcox, who also was in the room.

The student didn't point the gun at anyone, Pope said. Classmates were stunned,

some screamed and others ran out.

"We all couldn't process this," she said.

Wilcox yelled "Run!" and grabbed Pope's arm. They fled out the classroom's back door, which leads to another classroom. The armed student was at the classroom's main door.

"As I was running, I was just like, Lord don't let this be it," Pope said.

She said the suspect student had told classmates that he could buy guns when he turned 18 and she knew he owned one.



Dave Killen/The Oregonian

Parkrose High School in Portland was under threat from a gunman on Friday afternoon.

Trial: Expected to close next week

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Copell allegedly helped Wilkins bludgeon 71-year-old Howard Vinge to death, stuff his body in a bag and dump it down an embankment along U.S. Highway 30 east of Astoria.

The couple allegedly absconded with Vinge's RV, with a car in tow. They abandoned the RV after it broke down on U.S. Highway 26 near Hamlet and drove Vinge's car to Arizona, where they were later apprehended.

Alexander Hamalian, Copell's defense attorney, had her recount a life of physical and sexual abuse leading to a similar dynamic of subservience in her relationship with Wilkins.

"You did as you were told," he said repeatedly in court on Friday.

The couple met Vinge in 2016 in Newport, where he offered them a place to stay in the RV in exchange for labor. They lived with Vinge for about two months before his murder, which allegedly occurred following an argument between Vinge and Wilkins in Astoria over moving the RV.

Vinge died of blunt-force trauma from a driftwood



Colin Murphey/The Astorian

Adeena Copell testifies in court Friday during a murder trial in connection with the death of Howard Vinge in 2016.

club. Copell testified to having heard and seen part of the attack, but not taking part. After having beaten someone to death in front of her, Wilkins made her fear for her life, Copell said.

Copell had initially corroborated a story with Wilkins about Vinge's death, but later confessed to police that he killed Vinge.

While in custody, she attempted to recant her confession and say Wilkins had killed Vinge in self-defense after he attacked the couple. She passed notes back and forth with Wilkins in jail in

an attempt to corroborate a story.

Hamalian, describing Copell as trapped between a dead friend and a lover, asked Copell what made her ultimately choose to come clean.

"Because it was the right thing to do," Copell said, at points breaking down in tears. The police "told me that somebody had dropped Howard on the side of the road like garbage."

"That was the breaking point?" Hamalian asked.

"Howard wasn't garbage," Copell said.

In his cross-examination, Deputy District Attorney Beau Peterson recounted the chain of events before, during and after Vinge's death, and how Copell had initially not admitted to authorities what had happened.

Peterson also pointed out how Copell had attempted to clean the motor home after the disposal of Vinge's body.

Peterson asked Copell about her comment that Vinge was not garbage. "Yet that is how you guys treated Mr. Vinge after he was murdered," he added.

Copell's trial is expected to close next week.

Chinook: Hope for environmental restoration

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Pulling them together

To the north of the Tansy Creek property lives Roble Anderson, whose family had owned the land since the 1950s, but who always felt as if he was living on Chinook land. Rather than sell to a developer, he and his sister, Mergrez Stratton, offered the land two years ago to the Chinook at significantly below-market value.

"I understand what they went through and what's happened since and their struggle to be recognized and so forth," Anderson said. "I thought that it would be a thing that would help pull them together more, if they had a piece of property on this historic site."

The Chinook Tribal Council voted to pursue the purchase and began fundraising. They gathered around \$125,000 in grants from organizations such as the Oregon Community Foundation, Meyer Memorial Trust, Collins Foundation and others. Another \$75,000 came from individual donations, many gathered from screenings of the new documentary, "Promised Land," about the tribe's struggle for federal recognition.

The Chinook plan a cultural center similar to the Cathlapotle Plankhouse built in the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge at the site of a former Chinookan village once visited by the Corps of Discovery.

"We are putting in grants for building structures out there, like a plankhouse and a utility structure," said Rachel Cushman, sec-

retary and treasurer for the tribe. "Hopefully, we can do some environmental restoration work out there as well (and) not just have it be another building site, but stream restoration and habitat restoration."

How that restoration looks is yet to be determined, Johnson said. The Chinook continue fundraising through a GoFundMe page titled, "Preserve Tansy Point Treaty Grounds."

The Chinook will also reach out to Warrenton and the Port of Astoria about expanding access to local plants such as basketgrass and other natural resources, Johnson said.

The Tansy Point site is the first in the Clatsop territory the Chinook Indian Nation owns, aside from individual property owners. The acquisition is bittersweet, given the group's history of disenfranchisement by European settlers.

Battle for recognition

Dart's original charge was to move the Chinookan people east of the Cascade Mountains, Johnson said.

"We were able to convince him that was not the right thing to do," he said. "We were saying what we've said all the way through to today, which is, 'We're going to stay with the bones of our ancestors.'"

But the Tansy Point Treaty, meant to give the Chinook a reservation including Willapa Bay and running south to the mouth of the Columbia River, was never ratified by Congress, thus beginning a continual struggle for payment and recognition. The Chinook briefly gained recognition

near the end of former President Bill Clinton's administration, but had their status rescinded shortly thereafter under former President George W. Bush.

The Chinook have gone to court multiple times seeking proper payment and recognition. The most recent lawsuit, filed in 2017 against the Bureau of Indian Affairs, is still ongoing.

The tribe's lawsuit argues that the Chinook should be recognized because of the Tansy Point Treaty, along with more than a century of legal battles. Recognition provides more access to money for cultural preservation and health care.

The lawsuit seeks access to a trust, created in 1970 and now totaling more than \$500,000, to compensate the Lower Chinook and Clatsop people for stolen land. The tribe received regular account statements until 2015, when Johnson was informed that as an unrecognized tribe, they did not have the right to get information or access.

The battle for recognition is a particularly sore subject for Johnson, who works as education director for the federally recognized Shoalwater Bay Tribe and has helped create linguistic and archaeological programs for other tribes. The Chinook face suicide, substance abuse and other similar issues as other tribes, albeit without recognition, a reservation or the related services, he said.

"For us to be able to survive here in the end, we need to be able to have land that's ours that we have the right to manage and govern," he said.

Subdivision: 'I don't see how we can approve something that is substandard'

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hearing on the matter, the Smith Lake residents could provide testimony, he said.

One of the sticking points in Caplinger's appeal involves a condition upheld by planning commissioners to require the construction of a secondary access road to Ridge Road for emergency vehicles.

The Clear Lake subdivision would be developed at the end of what is already a long, dead-end road. Previous development along Kalmia Avenue required variances to extend the road. Gil Gramson had to seek a third variance to extend the road even farther to create the new subdivision, as well as a variance to develop in the wetland.

A secondary access road was an important safety measure, planning commissioners argued in April. Cronin suggested commissioners require Gil Gramson to improve an existing gravel road that crosses several other properties. Gramson will need to get agreements from the other property owners to fulfill this condition.

Planning Commissioner Christine Bridgens was the sole vote against the project, concerned primarily about the quality of the proposed access road. Commissioners Paul Mitchell, Ryan Lampi and Mike Moha voted in favor of the project.

The road, even after improvement, would not be up to the city's standards for new roads, Bridgens contended.

"I don't see how we can approve something that is substandard, I don't get that," she said.

In his appeal, Caplinger noted: "The likelihood of obtaining an easement and building this secondary access road was not

explored in the staff report or properly conditioned in the approval, and the continuing unresolved secondary access is materially detrimental to public welfare."

Improving the road could also impact surrounding wetlands, which are valuable community assets, he argued.

"Allowing a string of subdivisions over locally significant wetlands, when there are other locations available for residential development is neither a reasonable nor an environmentally responsible exercise of due diligence by staff and the Planning Commission," Caplinger wrote.

Skip Urling, a former city planner, represented Gil Gramson in April and argued that the project will not impact much of the wetlands. He also argued against the requirement to develop the secondary access in full. Given the mix of ownership along the road, the Clear Lake subdivision developers did not want to get stuck building a "road to

nowhere," he said.

Caplinger and Rod Gramson also argued against allowing more variances in an area that has already required variances for past development — a point Lampi and Bridgens noted during the Planning Commission's discussion about the project in April.

Caplinger wrote that city code indicates prior variances allowed in a neighborhood should not be considered by city boards like the Planning Commission when making decisions about new projects. But that's exactly what the Planning Commission and staff did, he wrote.

He and Rod Gramson continue to have concerns about what development in the area could mean for the neighboring property now owned and preserved by the North Coast Land Conservancy. The land conservancy had asked that the developer be required to build a wildlife fence to keep people and dogs out of protected areas.

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