

Standing Up to Violence

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

“He was taking total advantage of this situation he was in with the power that he had,” Romeo says. “My brother is the smallest out of all of us, so he definitely switched from the women to who he thought was the weakest of us, the least threatening.”

Emilio says the incident occurred right behind the section of the MAX train where the driver sits. Pablo, 17, claims he even saw the driver open his door and peek out, then close it without intervening in any way.

The antagonist then got off the train, only to get back on seconds later and demand the brothers delete the video. He shoved them again before getting off the train for good.

The video of the incident has garnered much attention on social media, prompting both positive and negative responses.

“We’ve definitely gotten some bad comments on the Internet, but the positive outweigh the negative ones,” Emilio says.

The brothers’ decision not to involve the police sparked one commenter to falsely claim the boys didn’t call authorities because they’re “undocumented illegals” or have warrants out for their arrest.

“When I read stuff like that, I just feel like it’s written by someone that’s very sad,” Romeo says. “We’re three people that saw two people in trouble and we stood up for what is right and that was

it.” Emilio also expressed frustration over the current climate between minorities and the police.

“I watch the news. We’re three young brown kids, so I didn’t know how that would turn out,” Emilio told the Oregonian. Romeo defends his brother’s statement, while also pointing out the power that peaceful intervention can have.

“Yeah, maybe it would’ve helped to have someone of authority around to help deescalate the situation, but I think that what people saw in the video shows that you don’t even really have to call the police to defuse a situation like that,” Romeo says.

The Herrera brothers were born and raised in the Portland area and wish to keep the city the peaceful and progressive place they’ve known it to be.

Sweaney told the Oregonian how “extremely alert and uncomfortable” she has been since the incident with her focus now going towards learning to drive and avoiding public transit, but the brothers don’t feel that approach is that necessary.

“I don’t think this should make people scared to ride public transportation but of course you should be conscious and paying attention to what’s going on around you,” Romeo says. “If we had just stayed on our phones with our headphones plugged in we wouldn’t even have known that was happening.”

“You can’t live in fear of your life,” Emilio adds.

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