

Racism at Every Step

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

prejudice and Christian's continual taunts against his victims, people of color and other minorities, makes him a danger to society and an example of someone who perpetuates racism in Portland and the nation.

Demetria Hester was a TriMet passenger who was assaulted by Christian in a hate crime the night before his vicious knife attack on a Max train against three male passengers. Upset that he escaped the death penalty because of accommodations for his rights at trial, Hester said he should get no leniency now as sentencing approaches.

Christian will face a possible true life prison term when sentencing takes place on June 17 and 18 in Multnomah County Circuit Court, pending plans to satisfy COVID-19 safety and distancing requirements for the two-day hearing, court officials said Monday.

A jury convicted Christian of all

12 charges against him after trial in February. The charges included the murders of Taliesin Namkai-Meche, 23, and Ricky Best, 53, and attempted murder for the serious wounding of Micah Fletcher, then 21 on May 26, 2017.

He was also found guilty of hate crimes for threatening to assault Walia Mohamed and Destinee Mangum, two black girls who were passengers on the train as it approached the Hollywood Transit Center in northeast Portland. In Hester's case, on the night before the deadly attacks, he threatened to assault and kill her as she rode a TriMet train in north Portland.

In an interview with the Portland Observer, Hester, a member of the African American community, said she found elements of white supremacy and accommodations for Christian's racist behavior a constant in all aspects of the case, from Christian's continual outbursts speaking hate and defending First

Amendment rights, to the actions of TriMet officials, police, prosecutors and even the judge.

"White supremacy has fed into this," Hester said.

She said the first example one was the night Christian threw a bottle at her when she defended herself against his racist and deadly threats.

Christian was yelling that he was a Nazi, that he hated blacks and Muslims and Jews and was generally bellowing hate speech. After enduring that for a few minutes, Hester was the only one on the train brave enough to turn around and tell him to stop.

She said other accommodation for Christian's racist behavior came from the train conductor who was unable to stop the barrage of assaults, even as she screamed for help behind the conductor's door and the emergency call button was pushed. When Hester got off the train two stops later at the Rose Quarter, she used mace to defend herself against Christian's continued aggression. But when a Portland Police officer responded, she was questioned and

treated like the criminal, she said, while Christian was left alone to wash out the mace from his eyes at a nearby fountain and then given the time to takeoff as the officer waited for backup.

If police had arrested him, he could have been prevented from going on his deadly crime spree the next day, Hester said.

The police officer, she said, reacted by telling her "to shut up" and then wrote up a report describing the bloody attack against her as a regular assault case, not a hate crime, she said.

In addition, during the prosecution of the case, delays were allowed by the judge to give Christian added time to mount his defense, she said. It took three years for the trial to begin, so long that a law providing a possible death penalty was deemed by the judge to be no longer available, the consequence of a new law limiting death penalty cases in Oregon.

Hester also faults Judge Cheryl Albrecht for allowing defense attorneys to assail her own character as

a victim by bringing up to the jury a felony conviction she had in her own life. Then Albrecht warned Hester as a witness in the trial that she was out of line for speaking to supporters when the case was in recess and outside the presence of the jury, she said. But Hester said the judge failed to stop Christian's outbursts during trial, saying he repeatedly made taunts against her in the courtroom.

Hester said Jeremy Christian espoused hate in a murderous way, but his conduct was also grounded in the painful history of white supremacy in America where "white men just think they can get away with it."

Although Christian won't get the death penalty for his crimes, Hester hopes he does die in prison, possibly from infection or disease.

"I hope he gets COVID, I really do," she said.

In the meantime, Hester considers her own future as a mother and grandmother in another country, possibly moving to Africa where racism against black people is not the dominant culture.

Phased-in Openings Begin

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

will continue to monitor testing rates, effectiveness of contact tracing and isolation of the case, hospitalization rates and other metrics that are required to remain open

during phase one," Brown said Friday during a news conference. She hopes schools in the entire state can reopen in the fall.

The Oregon Supreme Court Monday stopped a rural judge's order that would have tossed out all

the statewide coronavirus restrictions.

A Baker County Circuit Judge had ruled earlier Monday that Brown erred by not seeking the Legislature's approval to extend her stay-at-home orders beyond a 28-day limit. The opinion now awaits review by all the high court justices.

In a statement, Brown praised the Supreme Court action.

"There are no shortcuts for us to return to life as it was before this pandemic. Moving too quickly could return Oregon to the early days of this crisis, when we braced ourselves for hospitals to be overfilled," she said.

Officials in Multnomah Coun-

ty, which covers Portland, have announced plans to hire contact tracers as required by the state to reopen. A week earlier Brown reported that Oregon was on track in meeting the goals that doctors and public health experts have laid out. She said that means the state has "the opportunity to begin rebuilding a safe and strong Oregon."

north by northeast
COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

North by Northeast Community Health Center is the only clinic in Oregon focused on African American health. We provide welcoming, high quality health care to adults who have Oregon Health Plan. Since 2006, our priority has been to serve the local African American community and to reduce the deadly effects of high blood pressure and diabetes. We are accepting new patients, and if you're uninsured, we can help you get covered!

To make an appointment or learn about our services, contact us:

(503) 287-4932 | www.nxneclinic.org

714 NE Alberta St., Portland Oregon 97211

JESUS

Coming Again

SOON!!



"Dear G-d, Please forgive ALL my sins. I accept Jesus into my heart as my Lord and Savior, Amen"

JesusIsComingAgain@usa.com
PO Box 231023, Tigard OR 97281