



Mayor Ted Wheeler and Police Chief Chuck Lovell

## New Policies Fight Bias in Traffic Stops

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler and Police Chief Chuck Lovell Tuesday announced two new policy changes surrounding traffic stops for the police bureau.

It comes as jurisdictions around the county have been debating so-called “pretextual” stops where bias can often become the driver of a police officer’s decision to pull someone over.

The Maine House of Representatives, for example, voted to advance a proposal on Monday to prevent police from pulling drivers over to investigate “unrelated criminal activity for which the officer does not at the time of the stop have an articulable suspicion.”

According to Mayor Wheeler, who serves as the city’s police commissioner, the policy changes in Portland will involve how officers make traffic stops for low-level infractions, and on consent searches of vehicles. Data in Portland shows a disparate impact on Black drivers for traffic stops and vehicle searches.

“I’m directing our sworn personnel to focus on safety violations and traffic on high-crash corridors,” Chief Lovell said, adding that stops of non-moving violations are still allowed but, “with emphasis on safety ... this seems like a sensible time to make this shift.”

Chief Lovell said he does not expect to see pushback from of-

ficers on the streets in regards to the policy changes.

Portland City Commissioner JoAnn Hardesty, a long time advocate for police reforms, issued a statement Tuesday supporting the actions Lovell and Wheeler are taking.

“I strongly support today’s announcement that PPB will no longer pursue minor traffic violations and will limit car searches, while informing drivers of their constitutional rights during these encounters,” Hardesty said. “This allows the police to focus on traffic violations that pose an immediate safety threat and other higher priority crime mitigation efforts, such as solving crimes related to the increase in gun violence.”

Hardesty noted that across the nation and here in Portland, traffic stops have historically led to unjustified police violence that have too often turned deadly for Black, Indigenous, and all Communities of Color.

Even less violent encounters have contributed to a feeling of being profiled and thus losing trust in law enforcement, she said.

“This is another positive step in the right direction and I want to thank the community that set these expectations for change through 150 days of protest last summer. The work continues and we will need your continued engagement to rethink community safety for all,” Hardesty said.

## Winfrey Picks Book by Oregon Author

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“One of my great joys is finding a new author whose work I can share and support,” Winfrey said Tuesday in a statement. “I was captivated by the work of Nathan Harris and look forward to discussing this debut novel with all of his new readers.”

The 29-year-old Harris, a native of Oregon who now lives in Austin, Texas, has said he wanted to show what it was like in the South after slaves were emancipated.

“The Sweetness of Water”

takes place in the imaginary town of Old Ox, Georgia, and tells of two brothers, recently freed, who find work on a neighboring farm run by a man who believes his son has been killed in the war.

“I’m so thrilled and honored to be chosen by Oprah’s Book Club,” Harris, a University of Oregon graduate and a former Michener Center fellow at the University of Texas at Austin, said in a statement.

“For a generation, Oprah has been a committed advocate for authors, elevating their work and enlivening the literary landscape.

To join the ranks of her previous selections is to have a dream come true,” Harris said.

A discussion between Winfrey and Harris will air July 23 on Apple TV+. Winfrey launched her first book club in 1996, and has been in partnership with Apple since 2019. She started her current club by selecting another novel about slavery in the 19th century, Ta-Nehisi Coates’ “The Water Dancer,” and in previous years has picked such debut works as Ayaana Mathis’ “The Twelve Tribes of Hattie” and Lalita Tademy’s “Cane River.”

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Despite chronic health issues, he started a photography business in Portland, then landed an internship and a job at Nike. Soon he’ll finish his business administration degree online through Oregon State Ecampus. And he’s ready for whatever comes next.

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