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LOCAL NEWS

Man Pleads Not Guilty to Killing 3 Women Accusations of dumping bodies in Oregon and Washington

AP-A man accused of killing three women last year in the Portland, Oregon, area and dumping their bodies has pleaded not guilty to all the charges.

Jesse Lee Calhoun's attorney entered the pleas Thursday to three counts of second-degree murder and three counts of abuse of a corpse in the deaths of Charity Lynn Perry, 24; Bridget Leanne Webster, 31; and Joanna Speaks, 32, news outlets reported. He did not speak during the arraignment in Multnomah County Circuit Court.

Perry and Webster were found in Oregon, while Speaks was found in an abandoned barn in southwestern Washington.

Their bodies were found over several months starting in February 2023 — in wooded areas, in a culvert and under a bridge — in a roughly 100-mile (160-kilometer) radius, sparking concern that a serial killer might be targeting young women in the region. Speaks' body was found in southwest Washington, in April 2023, but inves-



Jesse Lee Calhoun is seen in Multnomah County Court. (Dave Killen/ The Oregonian via AP, Pool)

tigators have said they believe she was killed in the Portland area. Police and prosecutors haven't said what evidence they have linking Calhoun to the deaths. The deaths of two other women during that time period are still being investigated, the Multnomah County District Attorney's Office has said. The families of the three women have told reporters they struggled with addiction or mental health issues.

Calhoun, 39, was arrested in June 2023 on unrelated parole warrants and incarcerated at the Snake River Correctional Center in eastern Oregon. He was indicted in May in the women's deaths. The Multnomah County jail on Wednesday listed Calhoun on its roster, indicating he

had been transferred to Portland.

The indictment came weeks before Calhoun was due to be released from state prison, where he was returned last year to finish serving a four-year term for assaulting a police officer, trying to strangle a police dog, burglary and other charges.

He was initially released in 2021, a year early, because he was among a group of people in custody who helped fight devastating wildfires in 2020. Gov. Tina Kotek revoked the commutation, which was issued by her predecessor, Kate Brown, last year when police began investigating him in the deaths.

Even if Brown hadn't commuted Calhoun's sentence, he would have been released before the deaths occurred.

Oaks Park Ride Malfunctions

Crews Rescue Trapped Riders

On Friday, June 14, at approximately 3:00 p.m., callers to 911 reported that an amusement park ride, the AtmosFEAR at Oaks Amusement Park, had stalled. Callers stated the ride was stuck with an estimated 30 riders belted in and upside down. Within moments, Bureau of Emergency Communications (BOEC) 911 call takers and dispatchers triaged the call and dispatched a high angle rope rescue response to the scene. This put in motion the multi-unit response with the closest fire Engine and fire Truck, along with the high angle specialty rescue team consisting of one fire Engine, one fire Truck, two Squads, as well as a Battalion Chief to oversee the command of the incident as well as the operations once on scene. Dispatch also initiated the response of a medic unit from American Medical Response (AMR).



Triage Area (Photo Courtesy of Portland Fire & Rescue)

While enroute to the location, dispatchers updated the responding units and notified them that everyone on the ride was reported to be safely restrained by the ride's safety equipment and that all riders were awake and breathing. Crews arrived on scene within about five minutes after dispatch. They then made their way to the ride, established command,

and began to work with Park facility staff to troubleshoot the best course of action. Simultaneously, out of an abundance of caution, a Medical Branch with a patient triage was established so that once the riders were returned to the ground, their medical condition could be evaluated. To augment the initial AMR medic unit that was dispatched, Command

requested an AMR Supervisor and additional AMR medic units should there be multiple individuals needing transport.

Coincidentally, approximately one year ago, Portland Fire & Rescue's high angle rope rescue team was invited to participate in an evacuation exercise/drill for this very ride by Oaks Amusement Park. This training opportunity

provided a strong working relationship and background for all involved as well as established a good pre-plan. As a result, PF&R and Park staff were able to manually override the system and safely return the ride and all riders to the ground. The ride was reported to have returned to the ground about nine minutes after this manual process began.

Prior to the riders being released, a medical evaluation was completed by PR&F and AMR medics to ensure there was no medical need and all vital signs were stable. The task of reuniting the riders with their parents once it was determined safe to do so was the next important task. PF&R worked with Park staff to reunite all riders with a loved ones who had made their way to the Park.

Out of an abundance of caution, it has been reported that one rider was transported to a hospital for observation after this incident. No further information will be provided about the patients age, gender, or transport location.