



Beth Nakamura/The Oregonian via AP

In this Nov. 15 photo, MAX stabbing suspect Jeremy Christian appears in court in Portland for a bail hearing.

Suspect in train stabbings says he was on autopilot

By GILLIAN FLACCUS
Associated Press

PORTLAND — A man charged with the stabbing deaths of two commuters on a Portland light-rail train was on “autopilot” and wasn’t fully aware of his actions until he heard passengers screaming that he was killing people, according to a psychological evaluation unsealed Friday.

The evaluation ordered by Jeremy Christian’s attorneys was submitted to the court last month as part of an unsuccessful bid to secure his release on bail. Christian, 35, has pleaded not guilty and is in custody awaiting trial.

At a hearing last month, Portland homicide detective Michele Michaels testified that Christian inflicted 11 stab wounds in 11 seconds after passengers confronted him about anti-Muslim comments directed at two teenage girls. Passengers Taliesin Namkai-Meche and Rick Best were stabbed to death.

A third man, Micah Fletcher, was slashed in the throat but survived.

Whether Christian was animated by racial bias and was harassing the girls or not before the attack could be pivotal questions in the case.

The defense evaluation

quotes Christian as saying the two girls were 15 feet away and he didn’t speak to them or direct his comments at them.

“At odds with accounts in the media, Mr. Christian reported that the two girls on the MAX did not cross his mind,” wrote Dr. Mark D. Cunningham, a Seattle-based psychologist.

Cunningham said Christian liked to make inflammatory comments in public to assert his right to free speech but was not driven by racial hatred. He had consumed sangria that day and planned to “do his free speech thing” because he was angry about being pepper-sprayed the night before by a passenger on another train.

“Mr. Christian reported that if he has been drinking, he tends to ‘talk politics’ on the MAX to see if he ‘can get someone’s goat,’” Cunningham wrote.

According to the detective’s previous testimony, Christian got on the train about 12 minutes before the attack, initially talking on his cellphone before making statements toward passengers in an agitated manner. Michaels said many witnesses heard xenophobic comments and rants about free speech.

GUTIERREZ: Began school only speaking Spanish

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low-income or underrepresented backgrounds. The application, which Gutierrez is currently working on, is due Dec. 12.

“The program tries to target low-income kids who they know (are) capable of attending those schools,” Gutierrez said.

He said the camps are not so much a way to build up his résumé as to give himself an idea of whether he’d like to attend these schools, and to get a feel for the school’s ability to assist its students.

Gutierrez has received some scholarship funds to attend those camps, but has raised much of the necessary money on his own.

While he knows he wants to attend a private college and is interested in going to the East Coast, Gutierrez says he has much left to figure out — including what he’d like to study.

“At the moment I’m still lost like every other student,” he said with a laugh.

Gutierrez’s teachers have noticed a work ethic they’re sure will take him far.

“I’ve been teaching 11 years, and he’s certainly the most self-motivated student I’ve ever encountered,” said Tammy Fisher, Gutierrez’s Advanced Placement Language and Composition teacher.

Fisher said that to find his passion for the English language, Gutierrez has had to overcome some hurdles.

Fisher said Gutierrez began school only speaking Spanish, and was in the English Language Learners program until middle school.

She said he pays attention to nuances of language many would ignore.

“Prepositions are really hard for English language learners,” she said. “But instead of just picking one and going with it, he always takes the time to look it up or ask.”

Fisher has also noticed Gutierrez’s inclination toward social justice.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Hermiston junior Camden Gutierrez began as his career as a student as an English language learner and is now looking at the possibility of attending an Ivy League college.

“I’ve been teaching 11 years, and he’s certainly the most self-motivated student I’ve ever encountered.”

— Tammy Fisher, Advanced Placement Language and Composition teacher

She recalled an assignment where the class was reviewing a news article about President Donald Trump’s plan to rescind protections for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals recipients.

“Camden was so interested in the content of the article that he did more research, and decided he wanted to further his response in the form of a letter to an Oregon legislator,” Fisher said.

Fisher said Gutierrez ended up sending his letter, which detailed his support for and perceived value of DACA, to Rep. Greg Walden.

She recalled another time when Gutierrez was looking out for others.

This fall, when Mexico was racked by earthquakes, he led the effort to raise funds for those affected.

“Camden stepped right in and researched relief organizations we could support,” Fisher said. Between his own efforts and his involvement with the National Honor Society, she said that he put together a coin drive and NHS is

wrapping gifts that will go toward the project.

“He used his voice to be a voice for someone else,” Fisher said.

Gutierrez said he has been thinking about college since he was in middle school.

“My mom always insisted that I continue to higher education, because she never had that opportunity,” he said. “So she kept pushing for her kids.”

Gutierrez said his father is supportive, but also wants his son to be realistic.

“Pretty much my whole life has to revolve around academics,” he said. “Growing up, it was regular for my dad to say, ‘We’ll go work on the farm,’ or ‘We’ll go pull weeds.’”

There wasn’t a heavy focus on homework. He sees it as helpful to take the education path, but not something you can rely on.”

Gutierrez said while he understands that perspective, his views are a little different.

That view led him to join Generation College, which allows students to learn

how to apply for college and scholarships and to visit local colleges and universities.

“Everyone there understands their circumstances, but they’re not going to let that define them,” he said. “Our standards are pretty high, but how can we meet them, regardless of the circumstances?”

Through involvement with that group, as well as the National Honor Society and Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America, Gutierrez has honed his leadership skills.

“Camden asked me yesterday about internship opportunities,” Fisher said. “He said he didn’t know what kind, but he really wanted to do something to make a difference.”

Fisher said she’s sure Gutierrez will do that, regardless of where he ends up.

“I expect nothing but amazing things from him,” she said.

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Jonathan House/PortlandTribune

Sorted ballots wait to be counted at the Multnomah County elections office Oct. 31, 2016.

Our Oregon files tax initiatives

By PARIS ACHEN
Capital Bureau

SALEM — The next face-off between Oregon business and public unions might take the form of dueling ballot measures Nov. 6.

Our Oregon, author of Measure 97, has filed two initiative petitions in response to a business-devised ballot proposal to strengthen the state’s constitutional requirement for a three-fifths majority to pass tax bills.

“This is our ongoing effort at Our Oregon to make sure corporations are paying their fair share and that we have increased transparency around business taxes,” said Katherine Driessen, communications director for the labor-backed political nonprofit group.

Our Oregon’s Initiative Petition 38, The Protect Oregon Taxpayers Act, would amend the Constitution to allow the state Legislature to approve new taxes with a simple majority, rather than a three-fifths vote.

Initiative Petition 39, The True Majority Act, would require a three-fifths majority only for personal income tax increases on individuals. The act would amend the constitution to allow lawmakers to pass taxes on businesses with a simple majority vote.

The business community’s Initiative Petition 31 would “codify business’s ability to not pay their fair share and make it increasingly difficult to pay for schools and other state services,” Driessen said.

Also known as “A Tax is a Tax Amendment,” the proposal would require a three-fifths majority vote by the state Legislature to increase taxes or fees, including changes to exemptions, credits and deductions. It was filed by Art Kegler of the Oregon Association of Realtors and West Linn real estate agent Alan Mehrwein.

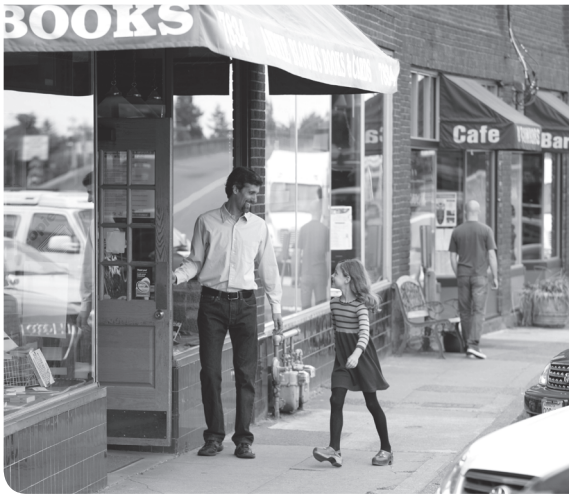
“The business community’s consensus is likely to be in support of IP 31,” said Pat McCormick, who was involved in the campaign against Measure 97. “Completely retracting the provision makes little sense. It is a fail-safe ensuring a strong consensus before additional revenue is raised.”

The campaigns are at different stages in signature gathering. IP 31 has already received a ballot title. Our Oregon is in the beginning stages of collecting the 1,000 signatures needed to obtain a ballot title.

The campaigns must collect 117,578 signatures by to win a place on the November ballot.

Business and labor groups clashed last year in a nearly \$50 million battle over Our Oregon’s ultimately unsuccessful Measure 97. The measure would have levied taxes on the sales of certain corporations.

Some business leaders have said they would accept an increase in corporate taxes, only if Oregon reigns in its public employee pension costs and delivers better results for the money it spends on education and other state services.



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