

Academy Award nominee credits Eastern for success

By DICK MASON
La Grande Observer

LA GRANDE — Award-winning documentary filmmaker Skye Fitzgerald, a 1993 graduate of Eastern Oregon University, is a risk taker. The premium Fitzgerald paid for kidnap insurance in 2020 is harrowing proof.

Fitzgerald purchased the insurance policy prior to filming “Hunger Ward,” a 40-minute work that documents the effects the war and famine in Yemen is having on children, families and health care workers. He shot the film over 30 days in January and February 2020 in northern and southern Yemen, a west Asian nation devastated by war between Saudi-backed pro-government forces and the rebel Houthis movement.

Fitzgerald, a two-time Academy Award nominee, said he never forgot he was in peril throughout his time in Yemen.

“I was on guard at all times. The fear was real,” he said.

The EOU graduate and members of his party took numerous precautions. For



Skye Fitzgerald, an Eastern Oregon University graduate, films a search and rescue operation in the southern Mediterranean in October 2016.

example, they kept their cellphones and laptops in a bag made of material that blocked signals from the devices, helping prevent potential abductors from detecting their location. Fitzgerald’s party also avoided traveling at night and made sure someone outside Yemen knew their exact location at all times.

Fitzgerald, whose party was detained during its Yemen visit for a frightening seven hours before being released, emerged from the war-torn nation with footage

that has caught the world’s attention. “Hunger Ward” is one of nine films to receive a 2021 Academy Award nomination in the short documentary category.

This is Fitzgerald’s second Academy Award nomination. His 2018 documentary “Lifeboat,” about North African migrants trying to make it across the Mediterranean Sea, also made the academy’s list.

Fitzgerald said he believes he owes his success to the support he received at Eastern, where he earned a degree

in theater.

“I have a deep sense of gratitude (for Eastern),” said Fitzgerald, who now lives in Happy Valley in Clackamas County.

Fitzgerald said if he had attended a larger school he might not have done as well because he would have been in larger classes with less access to his professors. He credited people such as former EOU theater professor Mark Kuntz and Mark Shadle, a former writing and English professor, with providing guidance at a criti-

cal time of his life.

“They took me under their wing when I was a young man trying to find my way,” said Fitzgerald, who graduated with a minor in creative writing.

The documentary filmmaker said he fears he might have lost his way had he attended a larger university, especially after growing up in Monument, a town of less than 200 people in Grant County. His high school graduating class had seven members.

Fitzgerald said he received an excellent education in Monument, but its small size did not prepare him for a large university experience, a major reason he enrolled at Eastern. Fitzgerald said his interest in theater was piqued in Monument when he appeared in a high school production of the “Wizard of Oz.”

“It sparked my interest, it primed me for theater,” he said.

Fitzgerald later appeared in many play productions at Eastern.

“I loved theater,” he said.

Fitzgerald said he didn’t switch his focus to film until graduate school at the University of Oregon. He originally applied to the theater director master’s program at Oregon because an EOU professor encouraged him. At Oregon,

however, chance led him to take a film class to fulfill a credit requirement.

“I was literally just flipping through the graduate catalog and I stumbled upon this television directing class at the graduate level,” he said.

Once he took that class, Fitzgerald said, he knew that filmmaking was what he wanted to do.

“Hunger Ward,” much of which takes place in two therapeutic feeding centers in Yemen for children suffering from malnutrition, is the third in a humanitarian trilogy that Fitzgerald is directing. The first was “50 Feet from Syria” (2015), which focuses on doctors working on the Syrian border, and then came “Lifeboat.”

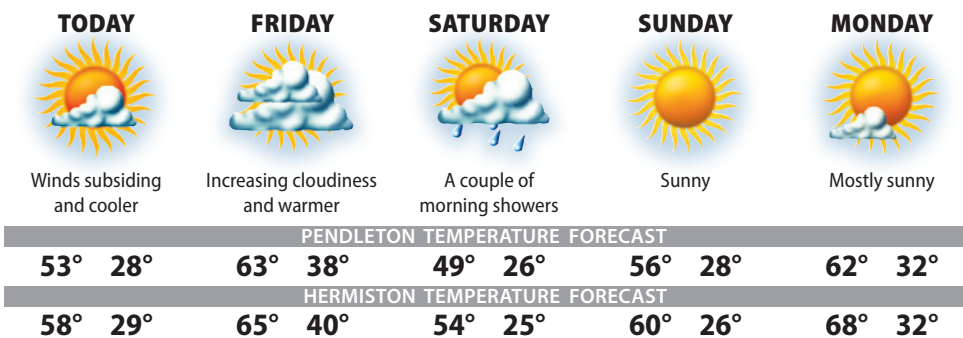
Fitzgerald said “Hunger Ward” is a film he was compelled to make because of the magnitude of the crisis in Yemen, where many children are starving.

“I did not want to make this film, but I believed I needed to,” he said.

Fitzgerald, who directed and produced the documentary, said he was elated when “Hunger Ward” was nominated for an Academy Award because this will draw greater attention to what is happening in Yemen.

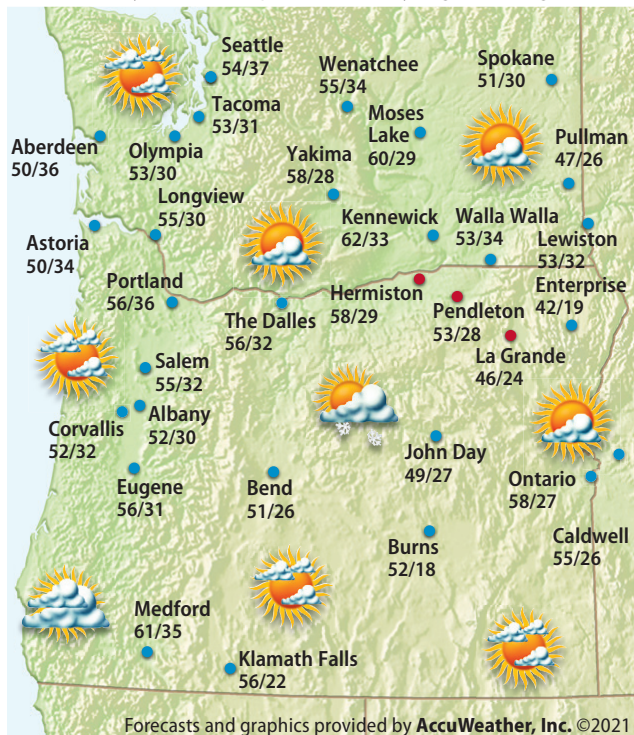
“It will place it on an elevated stage,” Fitzgerald said.

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.



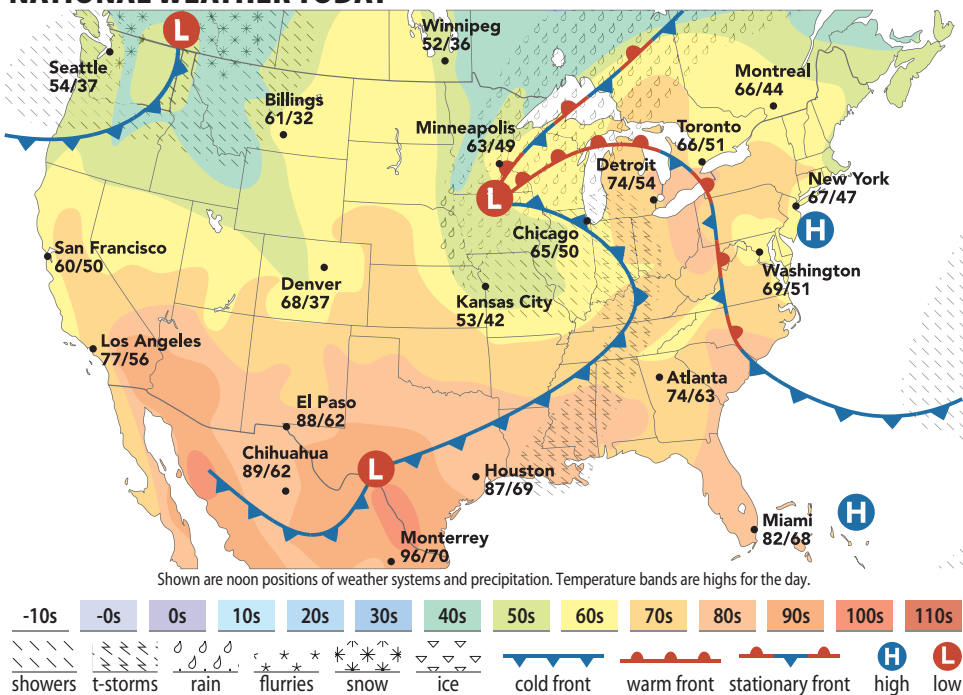
ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.			
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW	
Yesterday	64°	37°	
Normals	60°	38°	
Records	87° (1977)	24° (1908)	
PRECIPITATION			
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"		
Month to date	Trace		
Normal month to date	0.31"		
Year to date	3.34"		
Last year to date	4.98"		
Normal year to date	4.27"		
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.			
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW	
Yesterday	66°	36°	
Normals	63°	38°	
Records	86° (1934)	19° (1928)	
PRECIPITATION			
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"		
Month to date	Trace		
Normal month to date	0.16"		
Year to date	1.20"		
Last year to date	0.48"		
Normal year to date	3.27"		
WINDS (in mph)			
Today	W 10-20	Fri. WSW 8-16	
Pendleton	W 12-25	W 6-12	
SUN AND MOON			
Sunrise today	6:22 a.m.		
Sunset tonight	7:33 p.m.		
Moonrise today	5:31 a.m.		
Moonset today	4:08 p.m.		
New First Full Last			
Apr 11	Apr 19	Apr 26	May 3

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 100° in Zapata, Texas Low 14° in Alamosa, Colo.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



Idaho man backs into gas pump, punches police officer and hospital security guard

By JAYSON JACOBY
Baker City Herald

BAKER CITY — A Boise, Idaho, man is in the Baker County Jail on multiple charges, including assaulting a peace officer, after he twice hit a Baker City police officer in the face during an altercation on Tuesday, April 6, at Saint Alphonsus Medical Center-Baker City.

Andrew Lane Peterman, 36, is also charged with fourth-degree assault, second-degree criminal mischief and second-degree disorderly conduct. He was arraigned April 6, participating in the proceeding by phone from jail. Peterman’s bail was set at \$100,000.

Peterman is accused of hitting Officer Mark Powell and a security guard at the hospital, according to Baker City Police Department Sgt. Wayne Chastain.

Both Powell and the security guard were evaluated at the hospital and released, Chastain said.

Chastain, who has worked for the Baker City police for 20 years, said it’s

quite rare for a local officer to be assaulted by a suspect.

“We really don’t see this a lot,” he said. “It’s an anomaly. The community overall respects what we’re trying to do here.”

The incident started when police received a call about a vehicle backing into a gas pump at a Baker City convenience store.

Chastain said Powell arrived first, followed almost immediately by Officer Rand Weaver.

Peterman, the suspected driver of the 2005 Honda Element that struck the gas pump, initially agreed to undergo field sobriety tests, as Powell suspected that Peterman might be intoxicated, Chastain said.

But before Powell could administer the tests, Peterman said he wanted to be taken to the hospital.

A Baker City ambulance took Peterman to Saint Alphonsus, where he was evaluated and released, Chastain said.

But Peterman refused to leave the hospital after multiple requests, and in the ensuing altercation he

punched the security guard, Chastain said.

Powell used his Taser to try to subdue Peterman, who continued to fight, punching Powell twice in the face before Powell arrested him.

Peterman was evaluated again before being taken to the jail, Chastain said.

Chastain said he didn’t have any information about the extent of the damage to the gas pump. He said the fire department wasn’t called to the scene.

According to Idaho court records, Peterman pleaded guilty on Nov. 13, 2019, to aggravated assault and use of a deadly weapon in commission of a felony. He was sentenced to prison in January 2020, and released from prison, on probation, less than a week ago, on April 1.

According to an online story from a Boise TV station, Peterman, then 33, was arrested in September 2018 after police responded to reports of shots fired in a Boise neighborhood. No one was hurt in the incident.

IN BRIEF

OSP still seeking leads for missing woman

MEACHAM — Oregon State Police are reminding people in the area of the Interstate 84 work zone near Meacham to keep an eye out for anything that could lead to finding a woman who has been missing almost three months.

Deborah “Deb” Hendrichs of Ada County, Idaho, has been missing since Jan. 11. OSP Lt. Daniel D. Conner, of the La Grande Area Command, in a bulletin reported an Oregon Department of Transportation worker was the last person to see Hendrichs, whose 2012 black Toyota Rav 4 ran out of fuel on eastbound Interstate 84 near milepost 238.5 near Meacham.



Hendrichs

“Members of the Oregon State Police responded to the scene within 20 minutes to find the vehicle unoccupied,” according to state police.

Hendrichs is 56, stands 5-feet-6 and weighs 145 pounds. Multiple search efforts have not led to finding Hendrichs. Conner urged anyone who sees anything suspicious in the area to contact the Oregon State Police La Grande Area Command at 541-963-7175 and refer to case No. SP21-014895.

—EO Media Group

CORRECTIONS: The *East Oregonian* works hard to be accurate and sincerely regrets any errors. If you notice a mistake in the paper, please call 541-966-0818.

EAST OREGONIAN
— Founded Oct. 16, 1875 —
211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton 541-276-2211
333 E. Main St., Hermiston 541-567-6211
Office hours: Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Closed major holidays

EastOregonian.com

In the App Store:
EO **EO**
E-EDITION

East Oregonian (USPS 164-980) is published Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, by the EO Media Group, 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton, OR 97801. Periodicals postage paid at Pendleton, OR. Postmaster: send address changes to East Oregonian, 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton, OR 97801.
Copyright © 2021, EO Media Group

Circulation Dept.
For mail delivery, online access, vacation stops or delivery concerns call 800-781-3214

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

	Local home delivery	Savings (cover price)
EZPay	\$10.75/month	50 percent
52 weeks	\$135	42 percent
26 weeks	\$71	39 percent
13 weeks	\$37	36 percent

Single copy price:
\$1.50 Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday

ADVERTISING

Regional Sales Director (Eastside) EO Media Group:

- Karrine Brogoitti
541-963-3161 • kbrogioitti@eomediagroup.com
- Multimedia Consultants:
• Kelly Schwirse
541-564-4531 • kschwirse@eastoregonian.com
- Audra Workman
541-564-4538 • aworkman@eastoregonian.com

Business Office

- Dayle Stinson
541-966-0824 • dstinson@eastoregonian.com

Classified & Legal Advertising
1-800-962-2819 or 541-278-2678
classifieds@eastoregonian.com or legals@eastoregonian.com

NEWS

- To submit news tips and press releases: call 541-966-0818 or email news@eastoregonian.com
- To submit community events, calendar items and Your EO News: email community@eastoregonian.com or call Renee Struthers at 541-966-0818.
- To submit engagements, weddings and anniversaries: email rstruthers@eastoregonian.com or visit eastoregonian.com/community/announcements
- To submit sports or outdoors information or tips: 541-966-0838 • sports@eastoregonian.com

COMMERCIAL PRINTING
Commercial Print Manager: Holly Rouska
541-617-7839 • hrouska@eomediagroup.com