

Police:

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Montez joins Jessica Spalinger, 31, of Walla Walla, Washington, and Ashtin Romine, 26, of Clarkston, Washington, who were arrested around 10 p.m. July 17 in connection with the episode that began with the attempted burglary of Bullseye Muzzleloader's and More, 10201 W. First St., Island City, on July 17.

The gun shop's owner, Rick Gorte, was pleased to hear about the capture of the final suspect.

"I'm glad that they got him," he said. "He was a danger to our community."

Store owner recounts fending off two masked men

Gorte was cleaning up shattered glass on July 17 following a break-in at his gun store the night before.

Gorte said around 2:30 p.m. two masked men attempted to enter the shattered glass door of his store. He and the four family members and two friends with him in his shop yelled at the two masked men who then fled the scene.

The two individuals ran to and entered a white sedan — later identified as a 2005 KIA Spectra — parked west of the gun shop. Gorte's daughter, Randi Jo Shafer, then stood in front of the sedan in an effort to stop it from leaving. Its driver, identified later during an interview with Oregon State Police detectives as Spalinger, attempted to run over Shafer, Gorte said, but she leaped onto the hood of the sedan before being thrown off as the vehicle's driver sped away. Shafer's foot was injured as a result, according to arrest documents.

As the sedan's driver raced out of the parking lot, Gorte's son-in-law fired three shots at it with a pistol. Gorte said he believes at least one of the shots may have hit the sedan.



A law enforcement officer stands near a bridge over Shaw Creek outside of Elgin on Sunday, July 17, 2022. Multiple law enforcement agencies were in the area searching for a suspect after an attempted robbery in Island City followed by a high-speed chase that involved gunfire.

Andrew Cutler/The Observer

Gorte's son-in-law got into a vehicle and began following the sedan but pulled back when a Union County Sheriff's deputy, responding to a 911 call from the store, took over the chase toward Imbler.

Gorte said he thinks the two masked individuals and their driver were responsible for the earlier break-in and were attempting to rob the store a second time.

The chase and gunfire

According to arrest documents, shortly after fleeing the gun store, Spalinger switched out from the driver's seat with Romine, who then drove the vehicle to Hunter Road where it was located by pursuing law enforcement near Booth Lane.

"When the vehicle passed me, I saw three occupants in the vehicle; a male in the driver's seat and a second male in the back seat and a third person in the front seat," Union County Sheriff's Sgt.



Dick Mason/The Observer

Bullseye Muzzleloader's and More, a store on First Street in Island City, was the site of an attempted burglary on Sunday, July 17, 2022, that turned into a high-speed chase and a manhunt for three suspects on foot outside of Elgin.

Travis Schaad wrote in the arrest document.

Schaad attempted a traffic stop, but Romine failed to yield and continued at speeds of approximately 105 mph.

The pursuit ended up on Summerville Road, where Union County Sheriff's Deputy Dane Jensen reported shots were fired from the sedan, which shattered its rear window. One or

two bullets hit Jensen's patrol vehicle, which caused it to overheat.

The Observer Publisher Karrine Brogoitti was at her Imbler home on Summerville Road when the suspects sped past. She heard the sound of the speeding vehicle long before it flew by the picture windows of her living room.

The pursuit continued through Imbler onto Striker

Lane before turning north on Grays Corner Road. They took Rinehart Lane to Indian Creek where the vehicle crashed at the bridge on Indian Creek Road near Dutton Road.

Romine, Spalinger and Montez fled from the vehicle into the dense brush and vegetation. As a result, additional law enforcement was called to the scene and a perimeter was set up.

The Northeast Oregon Regional SWAT Team and the Oregon State Police SWAT Team responded to the area and ultimately located and arrested Spalinger and Romine late on July 17.

Romine was arrested for reckless endangering and for misdemeanor and felony fleeing, while Spalinger is in jail for first-degree assault, hit-and-run with injury, recklessly endangering and misdemeanor fleeing from police.

"Spalinger admitted they knew the police were

attempting to stop them when I turned on my overhead lights on Hunter Road," Schaad wrote in his report. "She stated Romine was driving at this time, which corresponds with what I saw when the vehicle passed me at Booth and Hunter Road."

The fallout

The owner of Bullseye Muzzleloader's and More said he has been overwhelmed by the expressions of support his family is receiving on social media.

"It makes you feel like people care, for sure," Gorte said.

Gorte, who has owned his shop for almost 10 years, said he finds it hard to believe something like this occurred in a place like Island City.

"You would not think this could happen in a small town," he said. "Things have changed and not for the best."

Gorte said he is relieved nobody suffered any major injuries. His daughter received medical treatment at Grande Ronde Hospital, according to police documents.

"I'm glad that nobody has been hurt," he said. "My daughter's foot will heal."

Gorte lauded the work law enforcement officers did to apprehend the three suspects.

"Our police force did an exceptional job," he said.

Gorte said he does not feel relieved of all the stress he's been under, though, because a lot of work is ahead as he pushes to get his store back in order following the break-in, but he said he does feel better.

"I'm more hopeful," he said.

The court has appointed attorneys for Spalinger and Romine. La Grande's James Schaeffer is representing Spalinger, and Canyon City's Kathleen Dunn is the attorney for Romine. They have hearing pleas scheduled for Aug. 15 and Aug. 22, respectively.

According to arrest documents, Montez is being represented by Rick Dall of La Grande. His plea hearing is set for Aug. 17.

Heat:

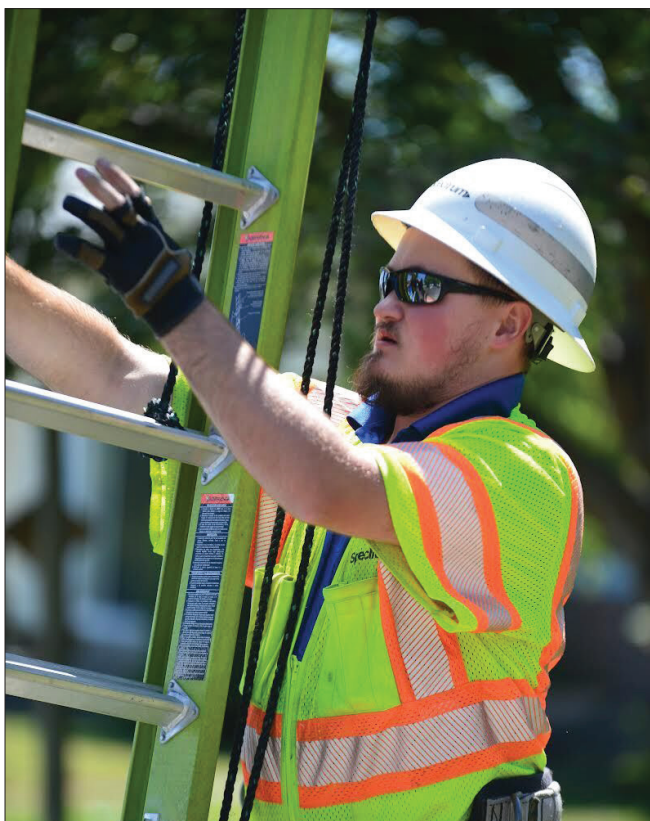
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Brooks, the coach of a youth boxing club in Pendleton, is so concerned about the projected hot weather, that he is giving his boxers the option of not coming to practice next week. He explained he does not know how many of his boxers have items like air conditioning in their homes to help lower their core body temperatures at night.

Temperatures will be lower in Enterprise, which has an elevation of 3,757 feet, because it is higher, but even the Wallowa Valley will not escape the heat wave, not by a long shot.

Enterprise is projected to have high temperatures of 85 degrees on July 23, 87 degrees on July 24, 89 degrees on July 25, 92 degrees on July 26, 93 degrees on July 27 and 95 degrees on July 28.

The projected Northeastern Oregon heat wave will hit about a year after a blistering one hit this region. That weather event, caused by a high pressure system described by many as a heat dome, one which blocked all weather systems out of



Dick Mason/The Observer

Landon Wilder, of Cove, a Spectrum field technician, works in sweltering heat Thursday, July 21, 2022, in La Grande.

the region, broke many high temperature records. Brooks does not expect the upcoming heat wave to shatter any records, but he said it poses a threat to people because of its projected prolonged nature.

"I'm not concerned about records, I'm concerned about

safety," Brooks said.

Pendleton and La Grande typically experience their hottest temperatures in the last week of July and the first two or three days of August, said Jim Smith, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Pendleton.

Home:

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"The mission will not be easy," Long said. "We will fly each night. Our mission is to stop fentanyl, meth and other illicit drugs from crossing the border, and additionally, to stop human trafficking and provide humanitarian aid to those in need. But my priority will be to use all of my skills and experience to bring everyone home on this deployment."

Long's final goal is to serve his last eight years in Pendleton, once again flying the CH-47.

"My last flight in the Lakota

will be Texas," Long said. "Upon my return, I will check into the Pendleton Chinook unit, and they will either tell me to turn in my gear and retire, or send me to fly the Chinook. Either way, I am good."

Long has spent a lifetime of public service in many capacities. He served several years on the Pendleton Airport Commission, is an ex-board member of McNary Yacht Club, a Pendleton Air Museum co-founder, former member of the Pendleton City Club and a 27-year volunteer at Happy Canyon.

"I can't wait for Round-Up," Long said. "I love the run-in." Long has an interest in helping the Pendleton Air Museum.

"I have a lead on an old

UH-1H (Huey)," Long said. "I think I can help PAM get the helicopter and we could put it on static display at the airport."

Long can work for the FAA remotely from anywhere within commuting range of Portland of his Rutan Long-EZ homebuilt light plane. World-famous engineer Burt Rutan autographed it in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, as the finest example of his design he had ever seen.

"I picked Pendleton because all my friends are here," he said. "Pendleton is my home. I love dinner at Cimmiyotti's on Friday night, a cold beer at the Packard, CrossFit at 1910 and the real feel of a community here."

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