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WILDHORSE RESORT & CASINO

Suspect, bystander injured in robbery attempt

Javier Francisco Vigil faces up to 20 years in federal prison if convicted

By ANTONIO ARREDONDO AND MARCO GRAMACHO
East Oregonian

PORTLAND — The suspect in the robbery and shootout earlier this week at Wildhorse Resort &

Casino near Pendleton tried to steal \$1 million.

The U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Oregon in a press release Friday, Aug. 19 reported Javier Francisco Vigil, 51, a local man, walked straight to the cashier cage in the gaming area on Aug. 17 and handed the cashier a note demanding \$1 million.

"Vigil then drew a holstered pistol," according to the press release, "pointed it at the cashier and threatened to 'bathe everyone in blood.'" Instead of the \$1 million, Vigil got

almost \$70,000 in cash before making his exit, when he then pointed his gun at a Umatilla Tribal Police Department officer who was responding to the robbery and fired.

Vigil suffered injuries in an ensuing exchange of gunfire before police took him into custody.

He made his initial appearance in federal court in Portland on Aug. 19 before U.S. Magistrate Judge Jolie A. Russo. Federal prosecutors charged Vigil with committing a Hobbs Act robbery and using and carrying a firearm during and in

relation to a crime of violence.

The Hobbs Act is a federal law from 1946 that further criminalizes robbery or extortion. A conviction under the Hobbs Act can mean a prison sentence of up to 20 years.

The court ordered Vigil to remain in custody pending further court proceedings. He now is an inmate at the Multnomah County Jail, Portland.

Caught in the gunfire

Wildhorse is on the Umatilla Indian Reservation several miles east of Pendleton. The Confederated

Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation reported the Umatilla Tribal Police Department at 1:04 p.m. responded to a report of a robbery in action at Wildhorse. Vigil was not the only one to take a bullet.

The Pendleton School District reported some of its staff were at Wildhorse and a school event.

"Several members of our staff witnessed the incident," according to the district, "and one staff member was injured."

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PILOT ROCK

Coming under fire

Former LA fire commissioner seeks ouster of Pilot Rock fire captain while chief is on leave

By JOHN TILLMAN
East Oregonian

PILOT ROCK — A former Los Angeles Fire Board commissioner is calling out the Pilot Rock Rural Fire Protection District for allowing a man with criminal convictions to stay in its ranks.

Rebecca Ninburg also stated Herschel Rostov, the district's new fire chief, is on administrative leave due to an ongoing sexual harassment investigation.

Ninburg sent an email Wednesday, Aug. 17, to local fire officials and news outlets that addressed Jim Critchley, chief of Pendleton Fire and Ambulance Department, and Tim Weinke, president of the Pilot Rock Rural Fire Protection District Board of Directors.

"I'm writing because I'm deeply concerned that Fire Captain Brian Hemphill is continuing to work for Pilot Rock Fire Protection District," she stated. "You are both aware that Captain Hemphill has felony and misdemeanor charges including assault and strangulation, DUI, and stealing medication from Pendleton Fire Department."

State court records show Hemphill pleaded guilty to 2013 charges of strangulation and fourth-degree assault, pleaded guilty in September 2015 to fourth-degree assault and in January 2016 pleaded guilty to driving under the influence of intoxicants. All the charges were misdemeanors and the cases were in Umatilla County. Records also show Hemphill completed probation in each case.

Nothing in the state court records verified Ninburg's theft assertion.

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OREGON GUBERNATORIAL RACE



Yasser Marte/East Oregonian

Oregon Republican gubernatorial candidate Christine Drazan, right, on Wednesday, Aug. 17, 2022, greets State Rep. Bobby Levy at the "Get the Scoop" ice cream social fundraiser at the Christian Life Center in Heppner.

Drazan rolls campaign into Heppner

Republican nominee visits Eastern Oregon, discusses 'Roadmap' for the state

By DAKOTA CASTETS-DIDIER
East Oregonian

HEPPNER — Christine Drazan rolled her campaign to become Oregon's first Republican governor in 40 years into Heppner on Wednesday, Aug. 17, for an ice cream social.

The event at the Christian Life Center drew several dozen people and some public officials, including Morrow County Sheriff Ken Matlack and fellow Republicans state Reps. Greg Smith, Heppner, and Bobby Levy, Echo.

"Getting involved in public service in the

first place for me was about service," Drazan explained, sitting for an interview within the chapel of the Christian Life Center. "It was really about the opportunity to make a difference and be effective. What I learned as a legislator was that my opportunity to really change outcomes, which is really what defines effectiveness for me, was really limited."

Drazan, 50, served in the Oregon House of Representatives 2019-22 for District 39, which includes parts of Clackamas County. She also was minority leader until 2021, when she left the state House to run for governor.

"As Republican leader, my caucus members proposed a hundred amendments to various pieces of legislation, and repeatedly it was on party line vote, rejected," she said.

With Democrats holding a supermajority in the Legislature, she said, Republicans have few tools to stop proposals they opposed.

It became clear, she explained, there was not going to be an opportunity for her as a Republican legislator in Oregon to work on big issues. But the governor's office offers just that.

"The governor's role is so critical and so important to provide balance and accountability," Drazan said. "In single party control, if you're in a state with only one party everywhere you look, you really don't have the kind of accountability that I think Oregonians want right now."

She criticized the "one size fits all" approach in Oregon government. Some rules and expectations that might be workable and culturally aligned in the more metro and suburban parts of our state instead affect the ability of rural Oregonians to support their families and lives.

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School supply drive exceeds expectations

Giveaway set for next week

By ANTONIO ARREDONDO
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Pendleton students can meet their needs for a backpack or other school supplies next week with a school supply giveaway.

The Pendleton Community School Supply Drive and Backpack Giveaway will take place Wednesday, Aug. 24 at Roy Raley Park from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Three local organizations are presenting the event: Blue Mountain Small Engine Repair, Let'er Uber, and Zom-B13.

Jesselee Leachman, the creator of Zom-B13, began the giveaway in 2021 with money from his own pocket. Leachman said he

purchased between 30-40 backpacks last year for those in need. He had wanted to keep things in 2022 but was lower on funds since buying a house.

That's when he came in contact with Alicia Reynon. The creator of the Let'er Uber group of Uber drivers in Pendleton heard about the situation and wanted to help.

"I put my foot down to the dirt and started doing what I could," Reynon said.

Leachman, Reynon, and James Turk of Blue Mountain Small Engine Repair all met to create a bigger fundraiser — the Community School Supply Drive and Backpack Giveaway. Initially, Leachman said the goal was to have around 50 backpacks. So far, they have 207.

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East Oregonian, File

Jesselee Leachman, owner of the Pendleton-based Zom-B13, poses for a photo in October 2017. Leachman helped form the Pendleton Community School Supply Drive and Backpack Giveaway, which occurs Wednesday, Aug. 24, 2022, at Roy Raley Park, to provide free school supplies to Pendleton students.



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