



OPINION

Offbeat Oregon History

Who had the motive to frame an innocent man?
Everyone did

BY FINN J.D. JOHN
For the Sentinel

In the cold light of history, the conviction and execution of Robert E. Lee Folkes was almost certainly a railroad job. And it's highly likely that the real murderer of the lovely young Martha Brinson James was none other than the prosecution's star witness, Marine Corps Pvt. Harold Wilson.

As outlined in last week's column, it was Wilson's conflicting testimony, along with an unsigned confession likely beaten out of Folkes by the Los Angeles Police Department, aided by the hostility of the jury and some rable-raising references to Folkes as a "zoot-suiter" in local newspapers, that sent the cosmopolitan young black man to the gas chamber.

But why? Why would all the authority figures, from the railroad's house detective all the way up to Oregon Governor Earl Snell and maybe even higher, have acted in this way, to hang a man they should have at least suspected was innocent of the crime?

We can't really know the answer to that question. But if you consider the consequences that might have resulted from Wilson being publicly accused of this crime, it begins to make a lot more sense — especially in the context of an America in its darkest wartime hour.

Southern Pacific Railroad

Let's start with the Southern Pacific Railroad. Geier, in his book, makes an excellent case for the railroad having had a strong incentive to pin this killing on Folkes. To the railroad, Folkes was a somewhat dangerous man — an intelligent, articulate, well connected black man who also happened to be a prominent member of a union that the railroad really wanted to break. Sending him up the river in the face of plenty of evidence of his innocence would send a powerful message to members of that union that it could not protect them.

Oregon law enforcement agencies

The various law-enforcement organizations charged with investigating this crime shared a strong incentive to pin it on Folkes rather than trying to indict Wilson for it. The reason was simple: to save face. There's no ambiguity

here: They all bungled it badly. First, they didn't secure the crime scene; the train stopped at several stations, with people freely allowed on and off, before law enforcement people met up with it at Eugene to start the investigation.

And when the agencies finally did get involved, they did it like a pack of paparazzi at the Oscars. There was the Lane County Sheriff's Office, the Eugene Police Department, the Oregon State Police, the railroad's own in-house detective bureau, and, once they got to the scene, the Linn County Sheriff's Office. Federal investigators from the U.S. Navy and FBI soon weighed in. Witnesses were interviewed and re-interviewed, all in a big room so that they could hear each other; naturally, their stories started to influence one another. Evidence was mishandled, stepped in, tracked around, and then cleaned up. Then, to top it all off, the railroad company parked the "murder car" on a spur line right next to the biggest U.S.O. facility in the region for a week, where it (and any lingering uncompromised evidence) received hundreds of visits from curious soldiers and sailors.

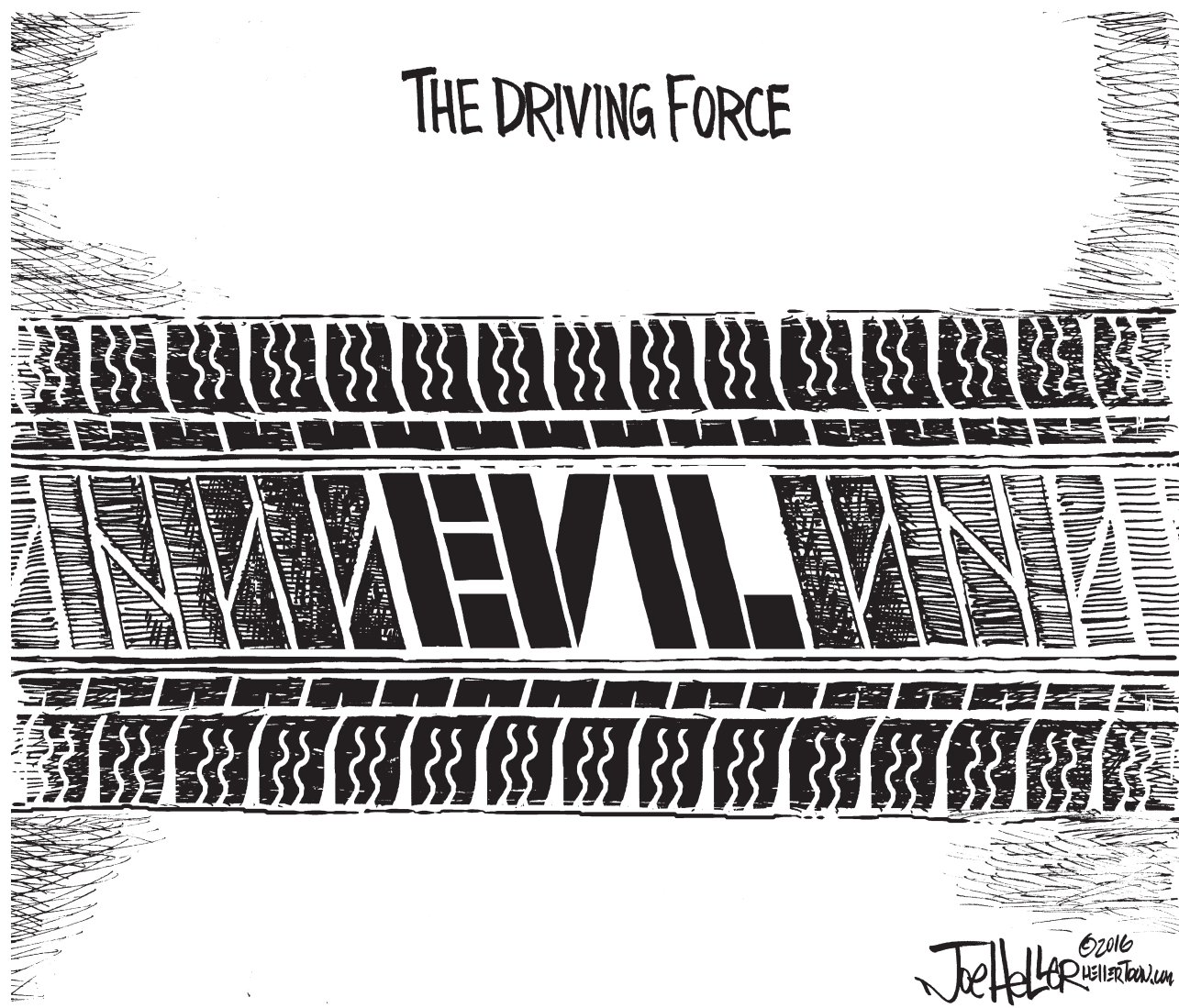
A day or two later, the story was in the headlines nationwide, and federal law-enforcement officials were making some very nasty remarks about evidence-handling and crime-investigating skills out in Oregon. A nationwide public-relations disaster was in the offing.

That much we know, as a matter of public record. Here's the speculative part of the scenario:

Oregon authorities can see it's important to find somebody to pin this on, and fast, so that they can get back to not being a national laughingstock. But the most likely suspect, Wilson, has had a week in which to get his story straight, and because he's white and a military man, any jury will choke on the "reasonable doubt" introduced by their failure to secure the crime scene. Prosecuting him will only result in a high-profile acquittal that will showcase every detail of their incompetence and make them look even dumber. What's needed is a fall guy to pin it on. And nobody's more vulnerable to that sort of judicial lynching, in 1943 America, than one of the train's

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THE DRIVING FORCE



Joe Heller 6/20/16
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Why no wireless?

One simple question with maybe a slightly more complicated answer: Why, in this age of technology and high-speed fiber optic cable access, does the Cottage Grove Library NOT have free wireless internet access?

It seems like a major oversight and travesty for users of a public library, paid for in part by tax dollars, for there not to be a free public wireless virtual on-ramp here in our little town to the information superhighway. Residents should not have to go searching for open wireless networks in bar rooms and coffee shops here and consequently feel compelled to buy something at either for the privilege of using their networks. Cottage Grove should not be a city of the haves (access to information) versus the have-nots due to income and ability to essentially pay for a seat at businesses with open networks.

Surely there are grant programs for such a thing? Surely a two-time All-America City and the Covered Bridge Capital of The World can do a little better for it's citizens? Surely

it's a better use of financial resources than repaving Main Street or re-doing a city park (All-America Square)? Ok, there were several more rhetorical and not so simply answered questions. As the kids say, "Sorry, not sorry".

I realize there are many aspects and issues to be explored in this topic. Maybe I have not informed myself and they already have been and continue to be discussed and reviewed regularly. But the fact remains that there is not one public place, to my knowledge, in town where there is free and open wireless access to information in an environment conducive to study and quiet research.

I would welcome the opportunity to stand corrected and would buy the first person to do so your next coffee.

Stacy L. DeHart
Cottage Grove

To CGPD:

There has been so much resentment and retaliation against police departments all across America simply because of a few incidents where some police have acted without justification of their actions.

That hasn't happened in the Cottage Grove Police Department. I have the highest regards and the utmost respect of the Cottage Grove Police Department.

Thank you for being who and what you are. Cottage Grove is so fortunate to have a police department like the one we have. I've lived here in Cottage Grove for 74 years. Thank you for making me feel safe and secure at a time when the world and the USA has so much insecurity. Please keep doing what you have been doing.

This is an original Bricker saying "you can never assume that a person is guilty of anything just because of their color" but only if they have broken the law.

Glen Bricker
Cottage Grove

Just do it: Both short and long workouts reap big results

BY JOEL FUHRMAN, MD
For the Sentinel

Exercise is crucial for health and longevity. A huge study recently published in JAMA Internal Medicine, on 1.44 million Americans and Europeans, has linked a high level of physical activity to a reduction in the risk



of 13 different cancers, including breast, colon, lung and liver. A low level of fitness is known to be a risk factor for cardiovascular and all-cause mortality.

So there is no question that exercise is a key factor in the health and fitness of your body. Yet, for many people the question is how much time and ability is necessary for exercise to be beneficial? The good news is even short sessions of exercise bring big results. The bad news is Americans are not getting enough exercise. How much exercise is enough to be valuable?

The current Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans call for adults to do a minimum of 150 minutes of moderate intensity aerobic activity per week or 75 minutes of vigorous aerobic activity, and they recommend doubling that amount of activity for additional substantial benefits to health. In addition, the guidelines call for moderate to high intensity strength training at least two days per week. The percentage of Americans who meet these guidelines has improved from 15.1 percent in 2000 to 21.5 percent in 2014, but that still leaves the vast majority getting inadequate activity.

Even a small, regular dose of exercise makes a difference. In a pooled analysis of six studies, people who got regular exercise but a smaller amount than the federal recommendations still had a 20 percent decrease in mortality risk compared to those who were sedentary. Those who met the recommendations had a 31 percent decrease in risk; the risk reduction reached a plateau at 39 percent for 3-5 times the recommended minimum of activity. Studies on runners have found similar results. Large reductions in all-cause mortality risk are commonly found in groups that run moderate

amounts compared to those that are sedentary: running or jogging about 2-3 times per week, a total of 1-3 hours per week, at six miles per hour or slower.

These results suggest that there are significant longevity benefits to be gained with even a small amount of moderate exercise. That being said, exercising more vigorously (for example, running rather than walking briskly) provides a greater benefit. Comparing exercise of different intensities but the same total calorie expenditure, more intense exercise has more potent effects on cardiorespiratory fitness. Also, vigorous exercise is associated with greater reductions in cardiovascular risk compared to moderate exercise.

Exercise is powerful preventive medicine, but many people think they can't fit adequate exercise into their busy schedules. Could we use the high intensity exercise strategy to reduce the amount of time we need to spend on exercise for good health (exercise very vigorously for just a few minutes)? This is what proponents of high-intensity interval training (HIIT) claim.

High-intensity interval training (HIIT) generally includes a short burst (usually 20-60 seconds) of maximum or near maximum effort followed by a recovery period, repeated several times. HIIT is used as a time-efficient strategy for improving cardiorespiratory fitness and athletic performance.

A notable study on HIIT published in April sparked headlines claiming that one minute of very intense exercise could produce the same health and fitness benefits as 45 minutes of moderate exercise. The study compared traditional endurance exercise to HIIT by assigning previously inactive men to three different groups for 12 weeks: A sedentary control group; an endurance exercise group (three days per week: 45 minutes on a stationary bike at a moderate pace, including a 2-minute warm-up and 3-minute cool down); and an interval training group (three days per week: 2-minute warm-up, 20 second all-out sprint, slow two minutes, 20-second sprint, slow two minutes, 20-second sprint, 3-minute cool down; a total of one minute of high intensity activity).

Before and after, the researchers took muscle biopsies and blood to measure indicators of cardiorespiratory fitness and insulin sensitivity; they also measured body composition. Both groups saw improvements in

their body fat percentage, cardiorespiratory fitness, insulin sensitivity, and skeletal muscle markers of fitness and glucose metabolism. The striking finding was that the improvements were similar in the two exercise groups.

This study is notable because of the small time commitment they studied — 10 minutes, three days per week. At the end of the 12-week study, the total time spent on stationary bikes was 27 hours in the moderate intensity group and six hours in the HIIT group, but the benefits were similar.

One of the most common reasons people choose not to exercise is because they think they don't have enough time. This research suggests you don't need much time at all.

Dr. Fuhrman is a #1 New York Times best-selling author and a board certified family physician specializing in lifestyle and nutritional medicine. His newest book, The End of Heart Disease, offers a detailed plan to prevent and reverse heart disease using a nutrient-dense, plant-rich eating style. Visit his informative website at DrFuhrman.com.

Cottage Grove Sentinel

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Subscription Mail Rates in Lane and Portions of Douglas Counties:
Ten Weeks\$9.10
One year\$36.15
e-Edition year.....\$36.00

Rates in all other areas of United States: Ten Weeks \$11.70; one year, \$46.35, e-Edition \$43.00.
In foreign countries, postage extra.

No subscription for less than Ten Weeks. Subscription rates are subject to change upon 30 days' notice. All subscriptions must be paid prior to beginning the subscription and are non-refundable.

Periodicals postage paid at Cottage Grove, Oregon.

Postmaster: Send address changes to P.O. Box 35, Cottage Grove, OR 97424.

Local Mail Service:

If you don't receive your Cottage Grove Sentinel on the Wednesday of publication, please let us know. Call 942-3325 between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m.

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Personal attacks and name calling in response to letters are uncalled for and unnecessary.

If you would like to submit an opinion piece, Another View must be no longer than 600 words.

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