

LOCAL, STATE & REGION

PORTLAND

Billboards aim to expose racism's violent impact on Black people

BY SAVANNAH EADENS

The Oregonian

"Destroy white supremacy, not each other."

That's the message plastered on several new billboards across the Portland area. The message is displayed between a large gold-colored bullet that includes a superimposed image of a slave ship.

At a Monday unveiling of one of the new billboards, the artist behind the image — Portland native Elijah Hasan — said the bullet, like a slave ship, is a vessel of trauma for Black people.

"It is my intention to remind the Black minds inside these Black bodies that they may think that these bullets fly because someone snatched or even killed a loved one," said Hasan. "But I am suggesting that this is not the reason you're shooting. But instead, it's a symptom of the environment you find yourself in."

Motivated by Portland's recent homicide rate increase, community organizations and anti-gun violence advocates — including the No Hate Zone, the

Portland Rotary Peace Builders Committee, Love is Stronger, and Books Not Bars Oregon — came together to create the billboards. Their goal is to "directly connect the issue of Black-on-Black gun violence to the self-hate that is procreated by racism."

The organizers hope to "reveal the impact that anti-Black trauma has had on the psyche of Portland's Black community," said Sam Sachs, founder of The No Hate Zone, a Portland racial justice organization. "The billboard campaign is done out of love and compassion, with the intent to bring awareness, action and solutions to the overwhelming number of shootings that impact communities of color, but more specifically Black men in Portland."

Portland Police Bureau data as of Monday shows 30 homicides this year, which includes 22 deaths from gunshots, including one fatal shooting by a police officer. There have been about 370 shooting incidents, and 118 people injured in shootings.



Beth Nakamura/The Oregonian photos

S. Renee Mitchell, left, crafted the language for the anti-gun violence billboard that was recently erected on Portland's Sandy Boulevard, shown in the background.



26-year-old charged with murder of his grandparents in Eugene

A 26-year-old man has been charged with killing his grandparents in Eugene, following a chase in which police say he challenged officers to shoot him. Nicholas Borden-Cortez was arraigned Monday in Lane County Circuit Court.

Along with two counts of first-degree murder, Borden-Cortez was charged with two counts of abuse of a corpse and attempting to elude officers.

Eugene Police identified the victims Monday as Borden-Cortez's grandmother, Nancy Loucks-Morris, 85, and his step-grandfather, Gerald Morris, 87. Police responded to a report of "suspicious conditions" at a home in the Falconwood Mobile Home Park just before 10:30 a.m. Friday, Eugene Police spokeswoman Melinda McLaughlin said. Borden-Cortez was taken into custody Friday reportedly following a vehicle chase that ended in Springfield.

—Associated Press

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SCANNING SESSIONS

- Thursday, June 10 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
- Friday, June 11 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
- Saturday, June 12 9 a.m. – 11 a.m.
- Saturday, June 12 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.
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