

ESCAPE

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Down to Florida

After graduating, he married a woman in Idaho. Their relationship was short-lived and he quickly moved to Wyoming and then Florida, working as a carpenter.

When he arrived in Florida he had roughly \$6,000 in cash. He woke up one morning in a ditch, "broker than a Georgia convict," he said.

Following this, he got a job working on a wealthy man's yacht as a deckhand.

"It was party time on that yacht 'cause he was always gone," Otis said. "He had a push-button bar that would open up, and it was solid booze on one wall."

Life was good for Otis. It got even better when he stole the yacht and sailed it to the Bahamas with the captain. When the owner realized what happened, life got significantly worse.

"He said, 'Otis, I'm giving you your notice.'"

Alcohol gave him permission to do these things and was a factor whenever he would lie, cheat or steal, he said.

Up to Oregon

From Florida, it was on to the discos and bars of Portland.

"I had a really good time in those years, until I reached a point in my life where I got so sick and tired of getting kicked out of bars, I bought one," he said.

This was part of a six-year period where he would regularly wake up not knowing if it was Tuesday or Sunday.



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It wasn't just drinking anymore either.

"Drugs are free whenever you have booze," he said.

His drug and alcohol use resulted in him being charged with driving while intoxicated seven times, three within a 30-day period. Willing to take anything, he was "just trying to get out of Otis," he said.

Seeking treatment

Eventually he came to terms with the fact he had a problem. He sold the bar to save his life and began treatment and thought it would be as easy as getting a quick fix, entertaining everyone at the treatment center

with his mandolin and walking out.

The employees immediately confiscated his instrument and told him to cut the jokes, that this was serious.

While in treatment he met a man with one eye sewn shut. Giving in to his curiosity, Otis asked him what happened.

The man told him he didn't know how he lost his eye; he just woke up without it.

This story moved Otis, motivating him to stay in treatment and stay clean.

And it worked, for six months. Once out of treatment, he went back to working as a carpenter.

In an interview, his boss com-

mended him for not drinking. However, he also opened a desk drawer revealing a pile of cocaine and asked Otis if he "partook."

"Well, shoot," Otis responded, "I've been known to partake."

And for three months, he said, it was "off to the races."

Turning point

One weekend, he was late picking up his daughter, showing up two days late on a Sunday. When he did show up, he fainted in front of her.

He woke up to her rubbing his face, saying, "You're sick, daddy. You're sick." That was a turning point.

Otis is now 66 and has been sober for 29 years. He recently became a grandparent, and couldn't be more enthusiastic about it.

"I'm so happy to be a grandpa. Oh my God, that kid is gonna be spoiled," he said.

In those 29 years, Otis bought a lodge and followed his dream of being an outfitter and guide, has been married for 18 years and still finds time to play a little music.

"I couldn't even look in the mirror and look in my own eyes before I got sober," he said. "I'm doing really good right now, and I just feel fantastic."



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The majority of Oregon wolves remain in the northeast corner of the state.

WOLF

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tough spot" Morgan has been in.

"What I've found is respect for your professionalism and objectivity," Wolley said. "It reflects on the whole department and on all of us."

Morgan was questioned about Oregon's wolf population. The state confirmed a minimum of 112 wolves at the end of 2016, only one more than the previous year after many consecutive years of rapid population increases. ODFW officials maintain the population survey late last year was hampered by extreme weather and that Or-

egon has more wolves than were counted.

Morgan said new wolves have shown up this year, ODFW placed more tracking collars on wolves than ever before, and he is encouraged by the numbers.

"There was talk of a stalled population, but one data point doesn't make a trend," he said. "I think we will see a promising increase in wolves. Oregon wolves, I'm confident, are doing well and will continue to do well."

The majority of Oregon wolves remain in the northeast corner of the state, but Morgan said they will continue to disperse into the Cascade Mountains and elsewhere.

LAWS

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offense, up to a maximum of 364 days."

He also said these new criminal classifications will increase his workload without providing any additional funding. Probation for felony crimes are supervised by the probation office while misdemeanors are supervised by the DA's office.

He also said the new sentencing guidelines could send the wrong message to young people.

"Oregon has just announced that possession of very dangerous substances, such as methamphetamine, is less serious this month

than it was last month," Carpenter said. "If anything, we should be telling our youth that possession of meth is more serious than it ever was."

Thad Labhart, clinical director at Community Counseling Solutions, disagreed. He said harsh penalties don't dissuade people from drug use, especially once addiction takes over.

"I think this bill helps county residents by assisting those who need treatment to receive it, which in turns addresses the underlying problem," he said. "Jail has been shown time and time again to not deter drug use. The upside of the bill outweighs any downside. ... One only has to look at our

jail population to see how stiff drug possession laws don't deter many."

Labhart said the bill is a step in the right direction in dealing with drug addiction in the state, but the focus needs to be on treatment. Community Counseling Solutions offers DUII counseling, individual counseling, family counseling, peer counseling and referral to inpatient/residential services as well as urinalysis testing and a jail diversion program.

He said supporting treatment did not mean being "soft on crime."

"Unfortunately, things like theft and money crimes often accompany substance use disorders. This bill

doesn't reduce penalties for such crimes," he said. "The bill, however, was supported by the Oregon Association Chiefs of Police as well as the Oregon State Sheriffs' Association. That alone says something."

The American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon took the stance this could be good for Oregonians.

"A felony conviction for small-scale drug possession can prevent people from getting housing, a job or a student loan," the ACLU of Oregon said in a statement. "The current approach is also unfair. People of color possess drugs at the same rates as everyone else but are more likely to be arrested."

CHAMBER CHATTER

THANK YOU GRANT COUNTY!! We survived the eclipse and in my opinion as well as others in the county our guests went away with an appreciation of our friendly nature and a preview of our many attractions that we get to enjoy each and every day. We were working with an unknown factor of how many visitors to expect and we were prepared and up for the task. I have heard estimates of 22,000 to 23,000 in the valley and it might have been a blessing that we didn't have as indicated a possible 50,000 visitors. The Chamber wants to thank each and every one of you for your efforts and we hope that some of you made a few bucks for your time invested. We also want to give a special thank you to Tammy Bremner for her organizational skills and for taking the lead a year ago in starting up the planning process for the eclipse, and kudos to her capable staff of dedicated volunteers, who have had their hands full helping her make this a very successful event. They also gave the Chamber a very positive public image. Who knows, maybe one of our visitors will bring a business back and provide a few jobs and more children for our schools.

The addition of our new 24/7 secured front entry public information area, plus the electric charging station and access to wi-fi, has worked out well and has provided an important service to our visitors and local businesses. Within the next two weeks you will become aware of something new at the Chamber office, which will be heralded a first in the nation, Grant County and in John, which will be in the forefront. STAY TUNED! For obvious reasons we are running a little behind with our annual dinner and installation of officers but it is in the works. This will be the completion of my third and final term as president of the Grant County Chamber of Commerce. It has been a real privilege and honor to serve such a vital and valuable organization, focused on making our county and businesses as viable as possible. I am extremely proud of what we have accomplished these past few years, and it is all because we have a good group of proactive board members, a dedicated office manager and her volunteer staff, plus a strong supportive group of Chamber members. I want to welcome our new incoming President Bruce Ward and wish him much success. I know that he will do a good job of keeping the Chamber moving forward in a positive direction. Our guest speaker for our September 21, 2017 lunch board meeting will be John Day City Manager Nick Green, who will address local projects and activities. Join us for both our 11:00 a.m. board meeting at the Chamber office and/or luncheon meeting at noon at the Outpost restaurant.

Jerry Franklin, President

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