

Jury rejects murder charge

By **BRYCE DOLE**
The Bulletin



Dean Guernsey/The Bulletin

La'Wanda Roberson, Barry Washington Jr.'s mother, reacts Wednesday, Nov. 16, 2022, to the jury's verdict finding Ian Cranston guilty of first-degree manslaughter in Washington's death.

that will bring a little bit of closure," Roberson told a crowd outside the courthouse. "I know that for the jurors, this was a hard case. I'm happy that they didn't side with the self-defense and they seen the truth. I'm just happy to have some sort of justice for my son."

Roberson said that experiencing the trial was difficult and that she was surprised by the jury's decision.

"I just didn't have any trust in the justice system in Oregon, I'm going to be honest," she said. "But I did believe in God and I did trust him."

Kevin Sali and John Robb, Cranston's defense team, said they planned to appeal the verdict but declined to comment further.

The mood outside the courthouse was somber but celebratory and led to a chant-filled march to the Capitol Bar after the verdict.

Deja Tillman, Washington's 23-year-old cousin, sat through practically the entire trial and seldom left the courtroom. On Wednesday, she took a moment at the site of her loved one's death near the Capitol Bar to share her memories of Washington. Losing her cousin was one of the worst experiences of her life, she said.

"I've been with him since diapers," Tillman said, her voice cracking as she cried. "I've been with him in Easter baskets. I've been with him since the first day of us being able to come home together."

The trial was full of dramatic moments, including Cranston's decision to take the stand. He testified that he feared Washington wouldn't leave he and his friends alone and that he had to shoot to

stop his punches. Cranston said he rendered aid to Washington after the shot because he didn't want him to die.

But in a searing closing argument on Tuesday, prosecutors J. Michael Swart and Brooks McClain sought to dismantle that claim piece by piece.

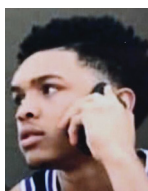
They argued Cranston used disproportionate force and was being reckless for mixing guns and alcohol. Swart showed that Cranston held onto a cigarette during the entire fight outside the bar and took a drag after shooting Washington. Swart argued it was evidence that Cranston did not fear for his safety during the fight and was not legally justified in using deadly force to defend himself.

Deschutes County District Attorney John Hummel told The Bulletin Wednesday that the closing arguments were pivotal to the verdict.

"His closing argument showed why I hired him," Hummel said of Swart, who declined to comment after the verdict. "I don't know if we could have won this case without Mike Swart."

Hummel said he was happy for Washington's family but had sympathy for Cranston's loved ones. In addition, he spoke to the broader implications of the verdict for the city of Bend.

"Many people said they didn't think Bend could hold Cranston accountable because Barry was Black and Ian is white," Hummel said. "Our town said: We're going to lead with the facts and the law and they delivered a verdict for justice and I couldn't feel better about it."



Barry Washington Jr.

BEND — Ian Mackenzie Cranston was found not guilty of second-degree murder but guilty of first-degree manslaughter in the shooting death of Barry Washington Jr., an unarmed Black man, in downtown Bend last year.

A 12-person jury in Deschutes County Circuit Court returned the verdict Wednesday, bringing an end to one of the most highly anticipated trials the county has seen in years.

The jury also found Cranston guilty on lesser charges of second-degree manslaughter, assault and the unlawful use of a weapon.

The jury of six men and six women, all of whom are white, began deliberations Tuesday afternoon and returned with its decision nearly 24 hours later.

Cranston, 28, of Redmond, said he acted in self-defense when he shot and killed Washington, 22, during a fight between them outside the Capitol Bar on Sept. 19, 2021.

The fight erupted after Washington complimented Cranston's fiancée, Allison Butler, outside the bar. Washington punched Cranston twice and his friend, Tyler Smith, once after a shouting match. Cranston then pulled out his handgun, stood for 30 seconds, took aim and fired.

The shooting sparked protests across Bend and made headlines across the country due to racial tensions surrounding the case.

When the verdict was read by Judge Beth Bagley on Wednesday, Cranston looked straight ahead, showing little emotion. Behind him, his loved ones stared straight ahead before some cried into their hands.

Washington's mother, La'Wanda Roberson, was shaking nervously as she sat in the courtroom, steeling herself for the verdict. Prayers were uttered among family members with her. When Bagley read the jury's decision, Roberson and her loved ones began to weep.

"Hopefully this is something

Eastern Oregon leaders keep an eye on campus incidents

By **ANDREW CUTLER**
The Observer

LA GRANDE — A pair of recent killings on or near college campuses have hit close to home for Eastern Oregon University leaders.

Four University of Idaho students were found dead in a rental house near the Moscow, Idaho, campus, and a 22-year-old University of Virginia student is suspected of killing three football players and wounding two other people as they returned by bus from a field trip. Both acts of violence appear to have occurred Sunday, Nov. 13.

"It is hard to imagine the pain and loss those university communities are experiencing," Lacy Karpilo, vice president for student affairs at EOU, said.

Police in Moscow, Idaho, say they have not identified a suspect or found a weapon in the weekend slayings. Police continue to believe the attack was targeted but have walked back a previous statement that there was no threat to the public. Autopsies have been completed and the results show that all of the students were stabbed to death.

"Investigators are working to follow up on all the leads and identify a person of interest," Moscow Police Chief James Fry said at a news conference. "We do not have a suspect at this time, and that individual is still out there. We cannot say that there is no threat to the community."

In the University of Virginia attack, a prosecutor says a witness told police the student suspected of opening fire on fellow students targeted specific victims.

"Anytime those happen at a national level, or anywhere related to colleges and universities, it always sparks a conversation for us internally to be aware," said Eastern Oregon Vice President for University Advancement Tim Seydel.

Seydel said university leadership is always reminding staff to watch for others — whether faculty, staff or students — who might be showing signs of distress.

"We oftentimes get questions about what we should be looking for. What are the issues there?" he said. "And while you can never predict that, we always encourage people to reach out. Particularly if you see students having difficulty. If you see something, say something, that kind of an approach."

Seydel added that all threats at EOU are taken seriously and immediately reported to the La Grande Police Department.

"And again, the important thing — if somebody makes a threat, it's important to track that down and find out what the heck's going on," he said.

Preparation and prevention

The Clery Act is a federal law requiring all universities to report serious incidents on campus, from underage drinking to sexual assault, Seydel explained, and EOU reviews all of those occurrences at least annually.

"We go through and look at everything, and we test our systems on a regular basis," he said. "And then every couple years we sit down and do an intentional walkthrough of a scenario and literally go through if we had an emergency take place, what would we do?"

Those scenarios are not just about violence, for example, Seydel said, but also for a fire or flood and other events that require responses that have long-term implications for the university.

"So if one of our buildings or one of our residence halls caught on fire or something, or one of our academic buildings was damaged somehow, how do you manage around that?" he said. "Where would the people who had offices in those buildings be relocated?"

When it comes to potential on-campus violence, he noted that easy and open access on university, community college and school campuses, including EOU, is changing, with a move toward using key card access and similar measures to make it more difficult to access buildings.

"They put some protocols in place that, while inconvenient, made sense," Seydel said.

The reality

Seydel said Eastern Oregon University through the years has had situations where there were "credible threats," including one case that involved a student who had some behavioral mental health issues.

When that happened, Seydel said, EOU staff alerted the La Grande Police Department, which brought in "all kinds of other resources to get the evaluation" as well as the Oregon State Police.

"Usually, a lot of times you see these things and there's a history there when they're making the threats," he said.

What's more worrisome is "when they don't have the history and we have no knowledge of it beforehand," he said.

"That's the scary part," Seydel said. "That's the part that should give us all concern, can somebody just walk into the university, well, any one of our buildings or into a school or any public space and do some real damage? I mean, we all live with that fear."



Seydel



Karpilo

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