

Man involved in Seaside hammer attack gets over 5 years

By Kyle Spurr
EO Media Group

A Seaside man involved in a hammer attack against another man was sentenced Friday, Sept. 11, in Clatsop County Circuit Court to more than five years in prison.

Joshua Lee Fitch, 23, pleaded no contest to a lesser charge of second-degree assault.

He was originally charged with attempted murder, robbery, criminal conspiracy and theft. The charges were dropped through a plea agreement.

In February, Seaside Police responded to Prov-



JOSHUA LEE FITCH

idence Seaside Hospital after receiving a report of a man who had suffered a serious head injury.

The man reported being assaulted with hammers by two other men, later identified as Fitch and Kevin Michael Burnham.

Fitch and Burnham were arrested a week later in Seaside after a police investigation.

Prosecutor Dave Goldthorpe said the two men tried to rob or steal from the victim in what appeared to be a drug deal situation. The two went after the victim and fractured his skull, which required expensive medical treatments to save his life.

"It's due to the extreme measures taken by medical staff that (Fitch) was not facing a murder conviction on this," Goldthorpe said.

In court Friday, Fitch's defense lawyer James Lee von Boeckmann said further investigation showed the two men did go after the victim, but it was Burnham who had the hammer and began wailing on the victim. Burnham stopped hitting the man only because Fitch intervened.

"I saved his life. I really did. I didn't take the steps to call police to go get him, but I do believe I saved his

life," Fitch said. "I told the truth and gave evidence and it doesn't matter. I'm still getting five years."

Fitch said he had never met Burnham until the day of the attack.

"He was just in my car and he asked me to give him a ride somewhere and that's how it started," Fitch said.

Judge Cindee Matyas explained to Fitch how he should not have been in that situation. She ordered him to have no contact with Burnham or the victim, as part of the 70-month sentence.

"Consequences are huge," she said.

Fitch also pleaded no contest Friday to possession of methamphetamine from an earlier case.

Last month, Burnham, 25, pleaded guilty to second-degree robbery from the hammer attack. He also pleaded guilty to first-degree attempted escape from Clatsop County Jail and to possession of methamphetamine from a previous case.

A sentencing hearing for Burnham is scheduled Sept. 25 in Clatsop County Circuit Court.

SEASIDE POLICE LOG

Aug. 21

11:43 a.m., 400 block of South Holladay Drive: Caller had questions regarding possible illegal activity in his residence. Officer advised.

7:02 p.m., Broadway: Third-party reporting disturbance at his business with vague information. Officer responded and advised verbal disturbance over policy and party had left and was unable to be located.

8:27 p.m., Queen Street: Caller reported backyard fire. Officer made contact with responsible and fire was extinguished.

Aug. 22

2:02 p.m., Beach: 911 caller reported transients on the beach drinking and smoking marijuana, and a possible young teen passed out. Lifeguard on the beach responded; nobody was passed out; no observation of public marijuana smoking. All appeared OK.

2:19 p.m., 800 block of South Roosevelt Drive: 911 caller reported subject with a warrant just left her business. Officers searched the area, but were unable to locate him.

2:22 p.m., U.S. Highway 101: 911 caller with medical emergency stuck in traffic trying to get to the hospital. Medix was unable to locate patient. Upon callback, caller reported they arrived at the Emergency Room.

4:56 p.m., Broadway: Caller reporting man with long beard yelling at the Turnaround. Officers responded, male was preaching the Gospel, not causing any problems or blocking the sidewalk.

10:06 p.m., North Prom: Caller requested trespass for transient sleeping on the property. Officers delivered trespass notice.

Aug. 23

12 a.m., Avenue A: Officer contacted intoxicated male.

Responsible was with him. They were waiting for a taxi.

4:56 p.m., Lewis and Clark Road: Report of neighbor seen crawling through crawl space at apartment. Officer responded; hole too small for a human to crawl through.

9:51 p.m., Downing Street and First Avenue: Officer responded to report of person acting erratic, wearing just boxer shorts. Upon officer arrival, subject was not in the area. Gone upon arrival.

Aug. 24

12:46 a.m., Beach: Officers responded to report of people in lifeguard tower. Upon officer contact, subjects were warned of trespass.

1:36 a.m., 400 block of Franklin Street: Officers made contact after 911 hang-up call. Upon contact, subject was intoxicated and warned for disorderly conduct.

8:44 p.m., 400 block of Avenue T: Officer responded

report of illegal campfire in backyard. Upon officer arrival, responsible person put out fire.

Aug. 25

3 a.m., Turnaround: Caller reported possible kids with stick on fire. Officer advised it is a battery-powered light.

9:23 p.m., 2500 block of South Roosevelt Drive: Officer assisted with combative patient that was transported to hospital by Medix.

11:03 p.m., U.S. Highway 101 Northbound: Officer advised of traffic complaint that 911 caller was not sure if it went U.S. Highway 26 or U.S. Highway 101 and unsure of plate. Officer out of position at time of call.

11:28 p.m., 1100 block of South Downing Street: Officer responded to an anonymous report of verbal disturbance. Upon officer arrival, location of disturbance could not be located.

SEASIDE Signal

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PUBLISHER
Steve Forrester

EDITOR
R.J. Marx

REPORTER
Katherine Lacaze

ADVERTISING MANAGER
Betty Smith

PRODUCTION MANAGER
John D. Bruijn

CIRCULATION MANAGER
Heather Ramsdell

SYSTEMS MANAGER
Carl Earl

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Claire Lovell

John Rahl
Darren Gooch
Esther Moberg

ADVERTISING SALES
Laura Kaim
Wendy Richardson

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