



Department of Justice

United States Attorney Billy J. Williams
District of Oregon

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THURSDAY, SEP. 17, 2020

WWW.USDOJ.GOV/USAO/OR

CONTACT: KEVIN SONOFF

PHONE: (503) 727-1185

KEVIN.SONOFF@USDOJ.GOV

COLORADO MAN CHARGED WITH HATE CRIME AFTER UNPROVOKED STABBING OF BLACK MAN

EUGENE, Ore.—U.S. Attorney Billy J. Williams announced today that a Colorado man has been charged with a hate crime after stabbing a Black man from Ontario, Oregon while the man was sitting in a fast food restaurant.

A federal grand jury in Eugene has returned a one-count indictment charging Nolan Levi Strauss, 26, a Colorado resident, with a hate crime involving an attempt to kill.

According to the indictment, on the morning of December 21, 2019, a 48-year-old Black man arrived at an Arby's fast food restaurant adjoining the Pilot Travel Center in Ontario where he planned to provide final documentation for a pending job application. The man sat in the lobby of the restaurant while waiting for the manager.

Unprovoked and without warning, Strauss approached the man from behind and stabbed him in the neck. Following a struggle for the knife, the man freed himself and Strauss was detained by store employees. When asked by the store employee why he attacked the man, Strauss stated he did so because the man "was Black, and I don't like Black people."

The stabbing resulted in two lacerations to the victim's neck. Afterward, he was life-flighted to Boise, Idaho for emergency surgical intervention.

Strauss will make his first appearance in federal court on October 19, 2020. If convicted, he faces a maximum sentence of life in federal prison.

This case was investigated by the FBI with assistance from the Ontario Police Department, Oregon State Police, and the Malheur County District Attorney's Office. It is being prosecuted by Gavin W. Bruce, Assistant U.S. Attorney for the District of Oregon, and Cameron A. Bell, Trial Attorney for the Civil Rights Division.

An indictment is only an accusation of a crime, and a defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

###