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District Attorney Mike Schmidt announces bias crime results in 18-month prison sentence

PORTLAND, Ore. – Today, Multnomah County District Attorney Mike Schmidt announced that 51-year-old Thomas DeLong received an 18-month prison sentence for committing a bias crime.

This case was prosecuted by Multnomah County Deputy District Attorney BJ Park.

DeLong pleaded guilty to one count of bias crime in the first degree, one count of menacing, and one count of disorderly conduct in the second degree.

The victim of the bias crime is African American and works for TriMet as a transit supervisor.

While working at the Barbur Transit Station in Southwest Portland in May of 2020, the supervisor heard another employee ask for help. The other employee, a TriMet bus operator, reported a disturbance involving a person later identified as DeLong. As the bus operator left the station to flee DeLong, DeLong hit the siding of the bus. After the bus left, only about 100 feet separated the TriMet supervisor and DeLong.

DeLong started screaming and running towards the TriMet supervisor.

DeLong, who is white, repeatedly used racial hate speech and clenched both hands into fists and swung them in a circular fashion while chasing the TriMet supervisor.

The victim pleaded for DeLong not to cause harm. As a result of DeLong’s hate speech and actions the victim feared being in imminent risk of serious physical injury. The victim sought safety in a TriMet vehicle until police arrived.

“Responding to acts of hate and providing justice and supporting victims of bias crime will always be a top priority for this office,” said Multnomah County Deputy District Attorney BJ Park.

The victim of the bias crime supports the resolution of this case, and encouraged the state to seek this 18-month prison sentence, which fosters ongoing supervision upon release and treatment opportunities for DeLong.

In addition to the prison sentence, DeLong will be on five years of formal probation and three years of post-prison supervision. Part of the probation conditions include having no presence on any TriMet property, having no contact with the victim, and undergoing a drug/alcohol/mental health evaluation.

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The Multnomah County District Attorney's Office thanks Victim Advocate Chanel Thomas for the support and advocacy she provided the victim. We also recognize Portland Police Officers Derek Harris, Joseph Sharpe, and Herbert Miller for their dedicated efforts investigating this case.

The Multnomah County District Attorney's Office was an active participant of the Oregon Attorney General's Hate Crimes Task Force and helped draft the language that was in Senate Bill 577. The law, which went into effect on July 15, 2019, renamed the crime of "intimidation" to "bias crime," added gender identity to the list of protected categories and removed the requirement that two or more people commit the crime in order to make it a felony in certain circumstances.

All potential bias crime cases, whether they are a felony or misdemeanor, are reviewed by the Violent Crimes Unit within the Multnomah County District Attorney's Office. If a misdemeanor bias crime is issued, the felony-level attorney will retain the case.

If you are the victim of a bias crime assault or you are witnessing one, call 9-1-1 immediately. If you are the victim of a bias crime and the suspect is no longer present or if you have information about a bias crime committed in the past, call the non-emergency line at 503-823-3333.

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