



Department of Justice

United States Attorney Billy J. Williams
District of Oregon

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SEATTLE MAN CHARGED WITH CIVIL DISORDER AFTER SHOOTING PORTLAND FIREFIGHTER WITH BALL BEARING

PORTLAND, Ore.—Jesse Herman Bates, 38, of Seattle, Washington, has been charged by criminal complaint with civil disorder after shooting a firefighter with a ball bearing during a protest in Portland on July 13, 2020, announced Billy J. Williams, U.S. Attorney for the District of Oregon.

According to court documents, in the early morning hours of July 13, 2020, a firefighting crew was working to put out a fire burning in the middle of an intersection in downtown Portland that was blocking traffic. A crowd of approximately 300 people were in the immediate area, some of whom were assaulting police officers and committing acts of vandalism and property damage. A firefighter, who was wearing a grey uniform with a large medic patch, was walking across the street to brief his team when he was shot in the chest with a round metal ball bearing.

The firefighter said the shot came from a protester armed with a “wrist rocket” style slingshot. A Multnomah County Sheriff’s Office deputy saw the suspect on camera and identified Bates as the slingshot shooter. Bates was also identified by his clothing. At approximately 3:50 a.m, law enforcement officers spotted Bates near a white tent in Lownsdale Square holding a crowbar. When officers confronted him and told him he was under arrest, Bates ran with the crowbar in hand. After receiving a less lethal munition to his backside, Bates dropped the crowbar and was taken into custody. He was later released.

On August 25, 2020, detectives from Seattle Police Department’s Robbery Unit received Bates’ outstanding federal arrest warrant and promptly issued a department-wide notice. Seattle police officers checked Bates’ last known address in West Seattle and learned that he was known to frequent Cal Anderson Park in the city’s Capitol Hill neighborhood. On September 1, 2020, bicycle officers spotted Bates on East Broadway Avenue near the park and arrested him without incident. He was then transferred to the District of Oregon by the FBI.

Bates made his initial appearance in federal court today before a U.S. Magistrate Judge. He was ordered released pending further court proceedings. If convicted, Bates faces a maximum sentence of five years in federal prison.

This case was investigated by the FBI. It is being prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Oregon.

A criminal complaint is only an accusation of a crime, and a defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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