

The Oregonian

Iraq veteran aids man slashed in Portland MAX stabbings

By Lynne Terry

May 30, 2017

Marcus Knipe never needed the basic medical training he received while serving in Iraq.

But he needed it Friday when he helped save a young man who suffered a slashed neck in the deadly attack on a MAX train in Northeast Portland.

Knipe, 34, was at the Hollywood MAX transit center that afternoon with his wife and 9-year-old son. They were waiting for a westbound train to go to Waterfront Park to enjoy the Rose Festival's CityFair carnival.

An eastbound train pulled up and Knipe could hear a commotion. He heard a man, who turned out to be the 35-year-old suspect Jeremy Joseph Christian, challenging others on the train.

"You want some, too? Come on. I'll give it to you," Knipe remembered him yelling.

"It was like he was trying to get into a fight," Knipe said. "I just thought it was a moron being stupid."

Then? Knipe heard screaming. Commuters fled the train. A young man staggered out, holding the left side his neck.

"I saw blood seeping between his fingers," Knipe said. "He had a pure look of terror."

That young man, Micah David-Cole Fletcher, 21 of Southeast Portland, had been stabbed in the neck. Two other men, Rick John Best, 53, of Happy Valley, and Taliesin Myrddin Namkai-Meche, 23, of Southeast Portland, were also stabbed.

Best, an Army veteran and Portland city employee, and Namkai-Meche, who earned an economics degree from Reed College last year, didn't make it.

Knipe locked eyes with Fletcher and when the two were within arm's reach, Knipe grabbed him.

Fletcher was saying, "Help me, help me, help me," Knipe said.

"Sit down," Knipe told him. "You have to calm down."

Fletcher was slashed on the left side of his neck just millimeters from his jugular. Knipe put his hand over Fletcher's hand, to stem the bleeding. A woman tossed over her toddler's jacket and Knipe applied that.

Christian came out of the train. He had a look of rage, Knipe said, as if he would kill anyone who came close. He is accused of slinging racial slurs at a teenage girl wearing a hijab and her friend, then slashing the necks of Best, Namkai-Meche and Fletcher, who intervened.

Christian clutched a black knife with a blade about 4 to 5 inches long, Knipe said.

Knipe said Christian challenged a large black man wearing a Marine beret. He then ran up the stairs and charged south. Two other men ran after him.

By then, even though only a few minutes had passed, Fletcher was doing better.

"I was able to get him to calm down and start breathing normally instead of almost hyperventilating," Knipe said.

The police arrived within about five to 10 minutes, Knipe said. They applied a dressing as Knipe held Fletcher's hand. Fletcher wouldn't let go, Knipe said. He stayed with him until the emergency responders arrived and whisked Fletcher to Legacy Emanuel Medical Center.

He was discharged Monday.

Fletcher's girlfriend, Miranda Helm, 22, said he is in as good condition as possible.

"I feel he's doing as well as you could expect someone to do in this situation," Helm said.

She said he was told by doctors not to return to classes at Portland State University, where he's studying music, or to go to his job at a pizza place. He lives with his mother, father and brother, Helm said.

He's not made any statements but plans to address the media perhaps in a few days, she said.

Knipe said he met Fletcher's mother Sunday and she told him: "You're our family's hero."

Knipe served three-and-a-half years in the Army, including 2004 in Iraq serving in the cavalry. He saw fighting.

But he does not consider himself a hero.

"I am a guy who was in the right place at the right time," Knipe said.

He looks forward to meeting Fletcher soon.

"We should all stand up for each other," Knipe said.

Ted Wheeler to federal government: revoke permit for Portland alt-right event

By Hillary Borrud

May 30, 2017

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler has asked the federal government to revoke a permit for what he described as an alt-right demonstration planned Sunday at Terry Schrunk Plaza across from City Hall.

Wheeler also said the city will not issue permits for such events, and appealed to the organizers to cancel them. He asked the federal government not to issue a permit for a second event, an anti-Muslim march planned for June 10th.

"Our city is in mourning, our community's anger is real, and the timing and subject of these events can only exacerbate an already difficult situation," Wheeler wrote on Facebook, referring to the stabbing attack on a MAX train Friday that left two men dead and a third wounded. "I urge them to ask their supporters to stay away from Portland."

Police have said the suspect in the stabbings was yelling slurs at two teenage girls on the train, one of whom was wearing a hijab, when the other men intervened to try to talk him down.

The purpose of the June 4th free speech rally in downtown Portland is to "bring back strength and courage to those who believe in freedom," according to the organizer's Facebook page. Vancouver-based Patriot Prayer has held other "free speech rallies," including one in

Montavilla last month where the **suspect in the Friday MAX train killings – Jeremy Joseph Christian – attended** and reportedly yelled racial epithets and "Die Muslims!"

Event organizer Joey Gibson has distanced himself from Christian, and **told The Oregonian/OregonLive** "we were clearly asking (Christian) to leave" the April event.

But in a video posted to Facebook Sunday, Gibson discussed security for the June 4th rally and said "there's gonna be more intensity, there's gonna be more threats." Gibson anticipated counter protesters from an anti-fascist group called Antifa, who he accused of "using the deaths of these two people – and Jeremy Christian – they're using it to get Portland all rowdy about our June 4th rally."

Wheeler's statement that the city would deny permits to alt-right demonstrators could raise constitutional issues. According to the American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon, governments can require permits for peaceful protests as long as they "treat all groups the same."

"The government cannot impose permit restrictions or deny a permit simply because it does not like the message of a certain speaker or group," according to the ACLU of Oregon's website.

Mat dos Santos, ACLU Oregon's legal director, tweeted on Monday that "Our hearts are broken, but government censorship is not the answer. We must defend the constitution even when it is uncomfortable."

When asked whether Wheeler believes his refusal to grant permits is constitutional, spokesman Michael Cox responded that the mayor "believes it's right." He later wrote on Twitter that Wheeler is also concerned about the potential for violence.

MAX stabbing victim was Portland employee, Army veteran

By Elliot Njus

May 30, 2017

Rick Best, one of two men killed in a brutal attack Friday aboard a MAX train, was a city of Portland employee, Army veteran and onetime candidate for Clackamas County commissioner.

Best, 53, worked as a technician for the city Bureau of Development Services, said David Austin, a spokesman for Portland Commissioner Chloe Eudaly.

He was headed to his home in Happy Valley when he and two others intervened as a man began hurling epithets at two teenagers aboard a MAX Green Line train, witnesses said. The man then pulled a knife and stabbed the three men, killing two and injuring one.

Best had three teenage sons and a 12-year-old daughter, Austin said.

Best grew up in Oregon, mostly in Salem, and attended Vocational Village High School in Portland.

He met his wife at Portland Community College, and then joined the Army. He said in a voter pamphlet statement that he served in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Best retired from the Army as a platoon sergeant for Corps maintenance in 2012 after 23 years in the military. He joined his family in Happy Valley and quickly became frustrated with the

county board, in 2014 launching an unsuccessful campaign in which he said he would not accept donations.

In January 2015, he began working for the city as a technician.

His supervisor at the Bureau of Development Services, Kareen Perkins, said Best was a dedicated employee who was well-liked by his tight-knit team.

"He was always the first person you would go to for help," she said. "I've talked to most of his coworkers today, and several of them said it's just like Rick to step in and help somebody out."

He worked hard to find his way in civilian life, Perkins said. In his job, he worked with about 30 coworkers and hundreds of customers seeking permits from the city.

"He was just really good at his job, and just great to work with," she said.

He also spoke frequently and fondly of his wife and four children, Perkins said.

City commissioner Chloe Eudaly, who until recently oversaw the bureau, released a statement memorializing Best:

"My heart goes out to the family of Rick Best. They have lost a husband and a father, and we have lost a treasured employee.

"Rick worked for the city for a little more than two years and was a valued member of our Bureau of Development Services team. And as a veteran, he served our country with honor and distinction. He stood up for two young women and others he didn't even know — all because he wanted to help.

"Losing a colleague is hard. Losing someone under these circumstances makes it even worse. We are very saddened at the loss of Rick and we will remember him fondly as we move forward."

Eudaly has asked city human resources to make sure there are counselors available to bureau staff when staff return to work on Tuesday.

The Portland Tribune

City Hall Watch: Vanport Day of Remembrance declared May 30

By Jim Redden

May 30, 2017

Plus, police reassure Portlanders after Manchester terrorism attack and City Council steps up enforcement on short-term rental regulations

The City Council voted to declare May 30 to be the Vanport Day of Remembrance last Wednesday.

Vanport, built in the Columbia River floodplain in what is now Northeast Portland, was the largest public housing project and second largest city in the state when it was flooded by a levee failure on May 30, 1948. It was originally built to house World War II shipbuilders and their families.

According to the resolution approved by the council, "Vanport became an experiment in racial integration, for as many as 25 percent of its residents — from all corners of the country — were African-American, when African-Americans were less than 1 percent of the entire state's population."

The resolution says this year is the 75th anniversary of the construction of Vanport, which included schools, stores, a hospital, a movie theater, and a two-year college.

Police say city is safe

Portland police reassured area residents there are no known threats to large-scale events following the May 22 terrorist attack in Manchester that killed 22 people and wounded dozens more.

Police spokesman Sgt. Pete Simpson said officers work closely with private security companies hired for such events and will make adjustments if the threat assessment changes. Simpson also encouraged people to call 911 if they see anything suspicious.

Major planned events include last Friday's opening of the Portland Rose Festival's CityFair in Tom McCall Waterfront Park and the annual Blues Fest over the Fourth of July weekend in the south end of the park.

Council cracks down on short-term rentals

The City Council moved quickly last week to implement Measure 26-194, which was approved at the May 17 special election.

The measure, introduced by Commissioner Nick Fish, clarifies that the city has the authority to collect lodging taxes from companies such as Airbnb and Home Away that list short-term rentals in private homes on their websites. Such taxes have historically been paid by hotels, motels, and bed and breakfasts.

Although Airbnb has been collecting the taxes from hosts and paying them to the city, Home Away has been fighting the requirement in court.

The resolution passed Wednesday gives the Revenue Bureau the authority to subpoena the names and addresses of the hosts from the companies. It is widely believed that only a small percentage have been inspected and licensed, as required by the city.

Wheeler wants far-right Saturday rally canceled

By KOIN 6 News

May 30, 2017

Portland mayor asks federal government to pull permit it has already issued for June 4 event at Terry Schrunk Plaza

Because of continuing tensions over last Friday's racist attack on a MAX train, Mayor Ted Wheeler is urging the federal government to revoke a permit for a far-right rally planned in Portland for Saturday.

The federal government has already issued a permit for the rally to be held in Terry Schrunk Plaza behind City Hall, which it owns.

Wheeler is also urging the federal government not to issue a permit for a similar rally in the plaza requested for June 10.

"Our city is in mourning, our community's anger is very real and the timing and subject of these events can only exacerbate what is already a difficult situation," Wheeler said at the press conference Monday.

Wheeler also urged rally supporters to stay away from Portland at this time, saying he believed they were "coming to peddle a message of hatred and bigotry."

"I'm reminded constantly that they have First Amendment right to speak, but my pushback on that is that hate speech is not protected by the First Amendment," Wheeler said. "It's never a good time to come to Portland, Oregon to spread your hate and your vitriol, but especially not right now."

The ACLU of Oregon responded to Wheeler's request by stating, "The government cannot revoke or deny a permit based on the viewpoint of demonstrators."

Rally organizer Joey Gibson of Vancouver later said Wheeler cannot convince him to cancel the rally on Facebook.

"If I cancel this rally and we don't have a permit, you're talking about hundreds of people just showing up in the park with no leadership, no voice of reason," Gibson said.

Gibson said his rally would not involve any kind of hate speech, insisting he has nothing to do with Jeremy Christian, the man arrested in Friday's attack that killed Rick Best and Taliesin Myrddin Namkai-Meche and seriously injured Micah David-Cole Fletcher. They intervened when Christian was yelling anti-Muslim and racist slurs at two teenage girls on the train, one of whom was wearing a hijab.

Christian is charged with Aggravated Murder (two counts), Attempted Murder, Intimidation in the Second Degree (two counts), and Felon in Possession of a Restricted Weapon. A Multnomah County Grand Jury is expected to consider additional charges in the coming days.

Saturday's rally is announced as supporting President Donald Trump. Although Trump denounced the MAX attack on twitter as "unacceptable," Wheeler says elected officials need to do more in times like these.

"We need action and we need leadership. We need the people in Washington D.C. and the people here in Oregon and the people at the local level to step up and show through action that they condemn bigotry and hatred and xenophobia and violence," said Wheeler.

KOIN 6 News is a news partner of the Portland Tribune. You can see their story at koin.com.

"I will make sure that I speak and say my piece because what I say goes against everything Jeremy Christian would have said," Gibson said on Facebook.

Wheeler said he's urging the federal government to immediately revoke the permit for the "alt-right" event, and to not issue a permit for another event on June 10.

Mayor Ted Wheeler holds a press conference days after 3 people were stabbed on a MAX train, May 29, 2017. (KOIN)

Mayor Wheeler said he was on Delta's inaugural flight from PDX to Heathrow Airport when news of the deadly MAX train stabbing came in. Within seconds, he said, he knew he had to arrange to get on the next flight back to Portland.

Since then, Wheeler said he has offered his "unconditional assistance and support" to each of the victims and their families.

"Our community remains in shock and mourning, but we're also tremendously grateful to our heroes and their families for their selflessness and heroism," he said. "I want future generations to remember what happened here and why, so that it might serve to both eradicate hatred and inspire future generations to stand up for the right values, like Rick, Taliesin and Micah did last week."

When the time is right, Wheeler said he would like to work with the victims' families to create a permanent memorial "to honor their sacrifice".

"The names of those 3 men... they'll be up with the greats," he said. "Their sacrifice is supreme and I do not want future generations to forget that."

While Wheeler said he was appreciative of President Donald Trump's thoughts and prayers, he said we need more from our elected officials in times like these.

"We need action and we need leadership," he said. "We need the people in Washington D.C. and the people here in Oregon and the people at the local level to step up and show through action that they condemn bigotry and hatred and xenophobia and violence."

The mayor said divisiveness, hatred and bigotry seem to be "crossing our country like a wave," and that "it has gone too far."

"These 3 guys stood up on a train in Portland, Oregon and pushed back against the wave," he said. "What I would tell them is, thank you for your courage. And now it's up to us... they took the action, they took the bigger risk, they made the bigger sacrifice. Now we have to stand up and back them, and we will."

Three stabbed on MAX station by man shouting anti-Muslim, racist slurs; two have died

By Jim Redden

May 27, 2017

UPDATE: Mayor Ted Wheeler issues statement deploring attack and calling victims 'heroes.' Suspect spotted at right-wing march in April.

Two people were killed and one other wounded Friday afternoon in a stabbing on a MAX train at Northeast Portland's Hollywood Transit Center.

Jeremy Joseph Christian, 35, of North Portland, is charged with two counts of aggravated murder, two counts of second-degree intimidation and one count each of attempted aggravated murder and being a felon in possession of a restricted firearm. He was lodged into the Multnomah County Detention Center at 2:12 a.m. Saturday, without bail, and is expected to appear in court on Tuesday.

He may face additional charges after the Multnomah County District Attorney's Office presents the case to a grand jury.

Names of the victims are expected to be released after the Oregon State medical examiner concludes autopsies on the two victims. Intimidation is a hate crime charge. The FBI says it is in touch with police to determine if any federal crime were committed.

According to police, the suspect was on the train shouting about hating Muslims and other minorities for several minutes before people confronted him. Police say he then attacked them.

"At the core of the FBI's mission is the belief that every person has the right to live, work and worship in this country without fear. Hate and bigotry have no place in our community, and we will not allow violence in the name of hate to go unanswered," says FBI spokesperson Beth Anne Steele.

One victim, a man, died at the scene. The other two victims were taken to a Portland hospital, where one was pronounced dead and the other was treated for injuries that are not expected to be life-threatening.

The incident occurred at around 4:30 p.m. May 26, on a MAX train as it pulled into the TriMet center near Northeast 42nd Avenue and Halsey Street. It was closed after the stabbing and TriMet was using shuttle buses to serve stations between Northeast Seventh Avenue and Southeast Main Street.

Spotted at right-wing march

Christian was spotted at a right-wing "March for Free Speech" about a month ago on Saturday, April 29. The march was

organized when the annual 82nd Avenue of Roses parade was canceled following anonymous threats sent to the Multnomah County Republican party.

The parade ended in a Burger King parking lot, where Christian — wearing a 1776 American flag as a cape and a Wolverine hat — was asked to leave by police and marchers when he began shouting racial slurs and gave a Nazi salute.

He left the event when most others did following Portland Police providing TriMet buses back to Montavilla Park, where the event began. However, he didn't board the bus, and instead walked away.

Victim named on social media

Although officials haven't yet released the identities of the stabbing victims, a post was made on Facebook naming Taliesin Myrddin Namkai Meche as one of them.

A woman named Asha Deliverance, of Ashland, Oregon, made a public post on Facebook saying:

"Taliesin Myrddin Namkai Meche, My dear baby boy passed on yesterday while protecting two young Muslim girls from a racist man on the train in Portland. He was a hero and will remain a hero on the other side of the veil. Shining bright star I love you forever."

Meche reportedly graduated from Reed College in 2016, the Oregonian reported.

Mayor Ted Wheeler released the following statement on May 27 deploring the attack:

Two men lost their lives and another was injured for doing the right thing, standing up for people they didn't know against hatred. Their actions were brave and selfless, and should serve as an example and inspiration to us all. They are heroes.

"There is too much hatred in our world right now, and far too much violence. Too much of it has arrived here in Portland.

"My heart goes out to the families of those who lost their lives, and to those who witnessed what happened. Thank you to our first responders, who provided aid, and police who captured the suspected killer.

"Now is the time, we must come together as a community and love one another. We must reject hatred and violence. We must seek justice."

Willamette Week

ACLU of Oregon Says Mayor Ted Wheeler's Attempt to Quash Alt-Right Rallies Violates the First Amendment

"If we allow the government to shut down speech for some, we all will pay the price down the line."

By Aaron Mesh

May 29, 2017

The American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon says that Mayor Ted Wheeler's efforts to keep far-right protesters from holding more rallies in Portland is an unconstitutional violation of the First Amendment.

Wheeler this morning announced that he has asked the federal government to revoke permits for a June 4 "free speech" rally in downtown Portland, saying the city was raw and angry in the wake of two slayings on a MAX train Friday.

The suspect in the killings is a white supremacist who has attended "alt-right" rallies in Portland.

Wheeler's announcement today drew immediate criticism from civil-liberties advocates. Shortly before 2 pm this afternoon, the ACLU of Oregon released its statement, in a series of tweets.

"The government cannot revoke or deny a permit based on the viewpoint of the demonstrators," The ACLU said. "Period.

"It may be tempting to shut down speech we disagree with," the statement continued, "but once we allow the government to decide what we can say, see, or hear, or who we can gather with, history shows us that the most marginalized will be disproportionately censored and punished for unpopular speech.

"We are all free to reject and protest ideas we don't agree with. That is a core, fundamental freedom of the United States. If we allow the government to shut down speech for some, we all will pay the price down the line."

The mayor's spokesman, Michael Cox, said Wheeler was not trying to muzzle far-right speech—but to break up a scheduled altercation between the "alt-right" and antifascist groups. Those groups had been regularly confronting each other, even before the Friday slaying of two men who confronted hate speech on a Portland MAX train.

"The mayor is not seeking to limit the content of speech," Cox said on Twitter. "He is seeking to prevent violence."

Mayor Ted Wheeler Asks Feds to Help Him Block Alt-Right "Free Speech" Rallies from Portland in Wake of Hate Slaying

The accused murderer, Jeremy Joseph Christian, was an enthusiastic participant in such events.

By Aaron Mesh

May 29, 2017

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler today asked the federal government to revoke permits for two "free speech" rallies planned by right-wing groups, saying the events would further inflame a city where a white supremacist is charged with murdering two people.

Events held around Portland this spring by the alt-right—a collection of online agitators and white nationalists—have repeatedly turned into violent political standoffs between extremists on the left and right. The accused murderer, Jeremy Joseph Christian, was an enthusiastic participant.

Wheeler said he would not issue permits for the next two events, both planned for next week by Vancouver, Wash. online provocateur Joey Gibson. He said the federal government had permitted one rally in Terry Shrunck Plaza, which is federally owned, and asked the feds to revoke permission.

"Our city is in mourning," Wheeler said, "our community's anger is real, and the timing and subject of these events can only exacerbate an already difficult situation... I am calling on every elected leader in Oregon, every legal agency, every level of law enforcement to stand with me in preventing another tragedy."

It is not a symbolic gesture. Unpermitted marches are the rationale that the Portland Police Bureau has used to crack down on political rallies on the left, deploying tear gas and stun grenades. Wheeler's statement raises the prospect of riot police trying to shut down a coalition of right-wing extremists that includes biker groups, militia men and celebrity brawlers.

Antifascist groups had already pledged to shut down the next scheduled event, a "free speech" rally planned for June 4 that has attracted some of the biggest names in the alt-right. Faceoffs between alt-right and antifa groups, resembling something like livestreamed gang rumbles, have become increasingly common in Portland and nationwide since the inauguration of President Donald Trump.

On Friday, that political violence turned into an act of horror, as Christian—a fringe figure even by the standards of the alt-right—allegedly cut the throats of three men who tried to stop his anti-Muslim abuse of two teenage girls on a rush-hour MAX train. Two of them died. A third is in the hospital.

Wheeler's statement today begins by honoring those three men, and ends by asking Portlanders to honor them with their choices in coming days.

"On Friday three men Rick Best, Taliesin Myrddin Namkai-Meche, and Micah Fletcher stood up against bigotry and hatred. Two paid with their lives. A third was seriously injured.

Our community remains in shock and mourning. But we are also tremendously grateful to our heroes and their families for their selflessness and heroism. They will serve to inspire us to be the loving, courageous people we are meant to be.

As Mayor, I wanted to update you on a few developments:

1) I have reached out to all of the victims and their families, including the two women who were terrorized and subjected to such hatred and bigotry. I have offered my unconditional assistance and support, day or night.

2) I have confirmed that the City of Portland has NOT and will not issue any permits for the alt right events scheduled on June 4th or June 10th. The Federal government controls permitting for Shrunk Plaza, and it is my understanding that they have issued a permit for the event on June 4th.

3) I am calling on the federal government to IMMEDIATELY REVOKE the permit(s) they have issued for the June 4th event and to not issue a permit for June 10th. Our City is in mourning, our community's anger is real, and the timing and subject of these events can only exacerbate an already difficult situation.

4) I am appealing to the organizers of the alt-right demonstrations to CANCEL the events they have scheduled on June 4th and June 10th. I urge them to ask their supporters to stay away from Portland. There is never a place for bigotry or hatred in our community, and especially not now.

5) I am calling on every elected leader in Oregon, every legal agency, every level of law enforcement to stand with me in preventing another tragedy.

6) When and if the time is right for them, I would like to work with the families to find an appropriate way to permanently remember their sacrifice and honor their courage. Their heroism is now part of the legacy of this great city and I want future generations to remember what happened here, and why, so that it might serve to both eradicate hatred and inspire future generations to stand up for the right values like Rick, Taliesin, and Micah did last week."

Army Veteran and City of Portland Employee Died While Standing Up to Killer on MAX Train

Ricky John Best, 53 of Happy Valley worked for the city's Bureau of Development Services.

By Rachel Monahan

May 27, 2017

A city of Portland employee and 23-year U.S. Army veteran is one of two men to have died confronting a white supremacist who was harassing to two young Muslim girls.

Ricky John Best, 53, of Happy Valley, died at the scene after the late Friday afternoon attack.

He worked for the city of Portland at Bureau of Developments Services since January 2015 after 23 years in the Army. He retired in 2012 after rising to the rank of platoon sergeant for Corps maintenance, according to an email to BDS employees from the bureau's interim director Rebecca Esau.

At the city bureau, which regulates construction projects, he worked as a tech in the permitting department.

He is survived by his wife, Myhanh Duong Best, and four children, Erik, Isaac, David, and Tramanh.

"This is an extremely sad, tragic and difficult time for us," writes Esau in the email to BDS employees announcing his death.

Police also confirmed the death of a Reed College graduate, Taliesin Myrddin Namkai Meche.

A 21-year-old Portland man was also injured in the attacks but is expected to survive, according to police.

Their alleged killer, a white supremacist named Jeremy Joseph Christian, is scheduled to appear in Multnomah County Circuit Court on murder charges Tuesday—the court is closed Monday for Memorial Day.

This afternoon's press release from the Portland Police Bureau says the two women who were targets of the anti-Muslim rant have been in contact with police detectives.

Update 3:20 pm:

City Commissioner Chloe Eudaly called Best a "treasured employee "

"Losing a colleague is hard," she says in a statement. "Losing someone under these circumstances makes it even worse. We are very saddened at the loss of Rick and we will remember him fondly as we move forward."

Full statement:

"My heart goes out to the family of Rick Best. They have lost a husband and a father, and we have lost a treasured employee.

"Rick worked for the city for a little more than two years and was a valued member of our Bureau of Development Services team.

"And as a veteran, he served our country with honor and distinction. He stood up for two young women and others he didn't even know – all because he wanted to help.

"Losing a colleague is hard. Losing someone under these circumstances makes it even worse. We are very saddened at the loss of Rick and we will remember him fondly as we move forward.

"I have asked our Human Resources bureau to make sure we have EAP counselors available to BDS staff when we return to work on Tuesday."

Dear BDS Staff:

I'm sure that many of you heard about the tragic stabbings at the Hollywood MAX station that happened Friday evening where two people were killed and a third was injured in the incident. It involved a man who was harassing two young women and others with hate speech and racist language.

Some of the riders on MAX stepped forward to calm the situation down when the man pulled a knife and attacked them.

It is with great sorrow that I have to inform you that Rick Best, a DS Tech I in the Permitting Services Section, was one of those who was killed. He died at the scene.

Rick was 53 years old and had been with us at BDS since January 2015. He retired from the U.S. Army as a platoon sergeant for Corps maintenance in 2012 after 23 years in the military.

He is survived by his wife, Myhanh Duong Best, and three sons and a daughter, Erik, Isaac, David, and Tramanh. My thoughts and prayers go out to Rick's family as they move forward in response to this terrible tragedy.

The police have a suspect in custody and Rick's family has been in contact with Portland police detectives about the incident.

While it is a holiday weekend and many of you might not see this email before returning to work next week, I wanted to make sure you knew about this and heard it from me. This is an extremely sad, tragic and difficult time for us. I have asked Human Resources to have EAP counselors available on Tuesday, when we return to work.

We will have details of where those counselors will be located in the 1900 Building to make sure that anyone who is grieving can be met with care and assistance. I urge you all to talk to each other, comfort each other and offer each other support through this difficult time.

Know that I am thinking of all of you on the BDS Team. Please take care...Rebecca

Rebecca Esau

Interim Director

Bureau of Development Services

City of Portland

Rebecca.Esau@portlandoregon.gov

After MAX Train Double Murder, Portland Mayor Cuts Short Trip

Ted Wheeler calls murdered men "heroes" for "standing up for people they didn't know against hatred."

By Rachel Monahan

May 27, 2017

Mayor Ted Wheeler has cut short a trip to London after a Portland white supremacist allegedly murdered two men who confronted him for harassing women with anti-Muslim slurs.

Wheeler issued a statement this morning at 5:00, calling the murdered men heroes.

"Their actions were brave and selfless, and should serve as an example and inspiration to us all," he says.

"There is too much hatred in our world right now, and far too much violence. Too much of it has arrived here in Portland."

Wheeler, who left PDX at 4:56 pm on the first direct flight to London, was in the air when news of the violence broke. Wheeler caught the first direct flight back to Portland and is expected to be back at 2:30 pm today.

"Now is the time, we must come together as a community and love one another. We must reject hatred and violence. We must seek justice."

Police released the suspect's name this morning at 5:30 am this morning.

Jeremy Joseph Christian of North Portland is being charged with aggravated murder, among other felonies. He has not yet been charged with a hate crime, though police say he "may face additional charges" after the case is presented to a grand jury.

Full statement from the mayor:

"Two men lost their lives and another was injured for doing the right thing, standing up for people they didn't know against hatred. Their actions were brave and selfless, and should serve as an example and inspiration to us all. They are heroes.

"There is too much hatred in our world right now, and far too much violence. Too much of it has arrived here in Portland."

"My heart goes out to the families of those who lost their lives, and to those who witnessed what happened. Thank you to our first responders, who provided aid, and police who captured the suspected killer.

"Now is the time, we must come together as a community and love one another. We must reject hatred and violence. We must seek justice."

Commissioner Chloe Eudaly Speaks to Portland in Hours After Train Attack: "Stand Together to Denounce Hate"

Two men were killed in the Hollywood District when they intervened in an anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant rant.

By Aaron Mesh

May 26, 2017

Portland is reeling tonight in the wake of the fatal stabbing of two men who stepped into protect women on a MAX train from an anti-Muslim screed.

As WW reported earlier this evening, the two men were killed in the Hollywood District when they intervened in an anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant rant by a man who directed his rage at two young women of color, one of them wearing a hijab.

One man is in custody. Police are still looking for the two young women who eyewitnesses said were the target of his rant.

Mayor Ted Wheeler left Portland today before the killings, taking the first direct flight from Portland to London. City Commissioner Chloe Eudaly is acting council president, a task that includes making city statements in the wake of tragedies.

Tonight, she released the following message:

“The city of Portland has a heavy heart right now, and our thoughts and prayers go out to the families and friends of the deceased and injured.

This is an especially sad and disturbing incident. People lost their lives or were injured because they stood up to hate.

We need to offer our heartfelt support to the two women and others who were targeted. The courage of the people who stood up for them is a reminder that we as a city need to stand together to denounce hate.

Thank you to the courageous witnesses who helped police locate the suspect before more people were hurt; thank you to the first responders and medical personnel who arrived quickly to administer aid; and thank you to the police for apprehending the suspect.

These are troubling times across our city, our country and the world. We cannot let this divide us. We need to unite against all forms of violence and hate. Our differences should be a cause for celebration, not something that foments hate.

I’m asking everyone to reach out and connect with your families, your friends and your neighbors. Let’s all stand together.”

The Portland Mercury

Mayor Ted Wheeler Says Feds Should Pull Permit For an Upcoming Alt-Right Rally

By Dirk VanderHart

May 29, 2017

As a pair of alt-right rallies in coming weeks threaten to exacerbate the already tense atmosphere in the wake of Friday's MAX killings, Mayor Ted Wheeler is calling on the federal government to pull permits for one of the events.

In a post on Facebook this morning, Wheeler announced that the city won't be issuing permits for a **"Trump Free Speech Rally"** being touted by Vancouver-based right-wing activist Joey Gibson, or a planned "March Against Sharia" to be held in concert **with events around the country** on June 10. The most-recent such event organized by Gibson on April 29 **attracted Jeremy Christian**, the 35-year-old who now stands accused of brutally attacking three men who were trying to stop him from harassing two teenage girls on a MAX train—one wearing a hijab, another Black. Christian allegedly killed two of the men by slashing them in the neck, Rick Best and Taliesin Myrddin Namkai-Meche, and severely wounded the third, Micah David-Cole Fletcher.

The problem with Wheeler's pledge: Both events are supposed to be held at downtown's Terry Schunk Plaza, which is controlled by the federal government. So Wheeler's asking the feds to revoke permits.

"The Federal government controls permitting for Shrunk Plaza, and it is my understanding that they have issued a permit for the event on June 4th," Wheeler wrote today. "I am calling on the federal government to IMMEDIATELY REVOKE the permit(s) they have issued for the June 4th event and to not issue a permit for June 10th. Our City is in mourning, our community's anger is real, and the timing and subject of these events can only exacerbate an already difficult situation."

Wheeler's also calling on the event organizers to voluntarily cancel their plans.

The mayor's not the only one bracing for the rallies, obviously. The group Rose City Antifa and others have announced their own **Stand United Against Facism Rally** in Chapman Square, adjacent to Schrunk Plaza, on June 4. It's unclear if they'll seek a permit for the event.

Update, 1:43 pm: Not surprisingly, the ACLU of Oregon is taking issue with Wheeler's efforts to kill the right-wing rallies, saying such prior restraint will cause problems.

"The government cannot revoke or deny a permit based on the viewpoint of the demonstrators. Period," the organization wrote on Twitter. "It may be tempting to shut down speech we disagree with, but once we allow the government to decide what we can say, see, or hear, or who we can gather with history shows us that the most marginalized will be disproportionately censored and punished for unpopular speech."

The mayor's office has responded that Wheeler is seeking to prevent violence, not limit speech.

Original post:

Here's Wheeler's full statement:

On Friday three men Rick Best, Taliesin Myrddin Namkai-Meche, and Micah Fletcher stood up against bigotry and hatred. Two paid with their lives. A third was seriously injured.

Our community remains in shock and mourning. But we are also tremendously grateful to our heroes and their families for their selflessness and heroism. They will serve to inspire us to be the loving, courageous people we are meant to be.

As Mayor, I wanted to update you on a few developments:

- 1) I have reached out to all of the victims and their families, including the two women who were terrorized and subjected to such hatred and bigotry. I have offered my unconditional assistance and support, day or night.
- 2) I have confirmed that the City of Portland has NOT and will not issue any permits for the alt right events scheduled on June 4th or June 10th. The Federal government controls permitting for Shrunk Plaza, and it is my understanding that they have issued a permit for the event on June 4th.
- 3) I am calling on the federal government to IMMEDIATELY REVOKE the permit(s) they have issued for the June 4th event and to not issue a permit for June 10th. Our City is in mourning, our community's anger is real, and the timing and subject of these events can only exacerbate an already difficult situation.
- 4) I am appealing to the organizers of the alt-right demonstrations to CANCEL the events they have scheduled on June 4th and June 10th. I urge them to ask their supporters to stay away from Portland. There is never a place for bigotry or hatred in our community, and especially not now.
- 5) I am calling on every elected leader in Oregon, every legal agency, every level of law enforcement to stand with me in preventing another tragedy.

6) When and if the time is right for them, I would like to work with the families to find an appropriate way to permanently remember their sacrifice and honor their courage. Their heroism is now part of the legacy of this great city and I want future generations to remember what happened here, and why, so that it might serve to both eradicate hatred and inspire future generations to stand up for the right values like Rick, Taliesin, and Micah did last week.

OPB

Portland Mayor Calls For Shutdown Of 'Trump Free Speech,' Anti-Muslim Rallies

By Bradley W. Parks

May 29, 2017

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler has urged the federal government to revoke a permit for a “free speech” rally and to refuse a permit for an anti-Muslim march planned for Portland in early June.

Wheeler made the request in light of a gruesome stabbing on a MAX light-rail train Friday, May 26. Two men died and another was seriously injured when they intervened to defend two teenage girls from a man’s bigoted tirade.

In a series of posts on Twitter, Wheeler said the events should be canceled.

“Our City is mourning,” the mayor wrote, “our community’s anger is real, and the timing and subject of these events can only exacerbate an already difficult situation.”

The “Trump Free Speech Rally” is scheduled for Sunday, June 4. It’s billed on Facebook as an “uplifting experience to bring back strength and courage to those who believe in freedom.”

The rally is set to be held at the Terry D. Schunk Plaza directly across from Portland City Hall. The site is managed by the U.S. General Services Administration, which issues permits for its use.

The other event is called the “March Against Sharia,” a nationwide anti-Muslim demonstration organized by ACT For America, which calls itself “the NRA of national security.” It is scheduled for June 10, also at Schunk Plaza.

In addition to requesting action from the federal government, Wheeler said his office is reaching out to event coordinators to cancel the demonstrations.

“I urge them to ask their supporters to stay away from Portland,” Wheeler wrote. “There is never a place for bigotry or hatred in our community, and especially not now.”

It was not immediately clear whether permits have been issued for the demonstrations.

Wheeler said the city of Portland will not issue permits for either event.

Jeremy Joseph Christian, the man accused of murder in the MAX stabbings, attended a similar far-right rally on April 29 called a “March for Free Speech” in East Portland. Police confiscated a baseball bat Christian took to the rally. He frequently used the n-word and saluted Hitler.

Christian has posted offensive material and anti-Muslim rhetoric on social media, said Heidi Beirich, with the Southern Poverty Law Center.

“This guy was definitely expressing anti-Semitic and pro-Hitler material, anti-Muslim rants as well,” Beirich told OPB. “We have sadly seen far too much violence from people who espouse these ideas.”

Wheeler also called on other state and local agencies to back him up in this request.

“I am calling on every elected leader in Oregon, every legal agency, every level of law enforcement to stand with me in preventing another tragedy,” he said.

The ACLU of Oregon responded to the mayor’s statement, saying in a series of tweets the city cannot “shut down speech we disagree with.”

“The government cannot revoke or deny a permit based on the viewpoint of the demonstrators. Period,” the ACLU wrote. It continued, “If we allow the government to shut down speech for some, we all will pay the price down the line.”