

The Oregonian

Homeless Shelter Shooting: Police Release Videos, Investigation Reports

By Maxine Bernstein

May 25, 2018

Portland police on Friday released investigation reports and 16 videos gathered as evidence in the April 7 fatal shooting of John A. Elifritz inside a Southeast Portland homeless shelter.

Videos came from at least four different cameras inside the shelter, from witnesses and surveillance cameras that captured part of Elifritz's alleged crime spree earlier that afternoon. Police posted their reports on the [Police Bureau's website](#).

Read:

[Case Files](#)

[Timeline](#)

A Multnomah County grand jury earlier this month found no criminal wrongdoing by police, who told investigators they acted in self-defense.

Police confronted Elifritz, a suspect in a carjacking, after he burst into the CityTeam Ministries on Southeast Grand Avenue armed with a knife just as an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting was about to start that Saturday night.

Men in the shelter were startled and quickly tried to move out of the way, saying the intruder was cutting himself and bleeding from the neck. They tried to corral him in a corner with chairs, according to a witness video provided to The Oregonian/OregonLive.

Police responded to the shelter at 7:58 p.m. Several officers congregated at the open door, guns drawn. Once other shelter residents scrambled to get out of the way, the officers entered, surrounded Elifritz and shouted at him to drop his knife.

Two Portland police officers first fired 40mm rubber rounds at him.

Police said Elifritz lunged at officers before five other Portland officers and one sheriff's deputy fired lethal shots, killing him. The shooting was reported at 8 p.m.

Police had encountered Elifritz, holding a knife to his throat, earlier in the afternoon but he backed away from them and they decided not to pursue him.

Soon after, Elifritz was suspected in an attempted carjacking and then a successful carjacking, a road-rage encounter and the crash of the stolen car before he entered the shelter.

By the time he was inside, emergency dispatchers and police had identified the man with the knife as Elifritz.

Earlier this week, his ex-wife Barbara Elifritz and their 12-year-old daughter Stormy filed a wrongful death lawsuit against the city of Portland, the Portland officers and the Multnomah County sheriff's deputy involved. The federal suit alleges police used excessive force against Elifritz.

The first encounter police had with Elifritz that day came after he called 911 at 2:25 p.m. and reported that his family had been murdered. He gave the location as the 4400 block of Southeast

79th Avenue. The location, though, turned out to be a duplex under construction. A contractor there said a man fitting Elifritz's description had been outside, acting strangely. No one was found inside, and police confirmed Elifritz's family was safe.

East Precinct officers found Elifritz a short time later at Southeast 86th Avenue and Holgate Boulevard and tried to contact him, "but he backed away from them, retrieved a knife from his pocket and held it up to his throat," police spokesman Sgt. Chris Burley wrote in a news release.

Elifritz ran from officers and police decided not to go after him. As officers were still in the area, a man came up to them and reported that someone was waving a knife and had just tried to carjack him. The man didn't want to report the crime but wanted the officers to be aware, according to police.

At 4:37 p.m., a woman reported her 2003 silver Honda CRV had been stolen from her by force at Southeast 72nd Avenue and Foster Road. Elifritz, police said, had jumped into the passenger seat and wrestled the driver for control of the SUV. The woman's father, in a separate car behind her, helped his daughter get away from the suspect and Elifritz jumped into the driver's seat and drove off, police said.

Then about 7:30 p.m., Elifritz crashed the stolen Honda on Southeast Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. and Stark Street, ran from the SUV into Jackson's Gas Station convenience store, where a clerk told The Oregonian/OregonLive that he was rambling about suicide and murder while holding a knife to his own throat.

Someone at the gas station, less than a block from the CityTeam Ministries, called 911. Employees said the man who ran from the crashed car didn't have a shirt on and described him as 6-foot-4 and about 280 pounds.

"I just showed a picture of the suspect that we do have to an employee who saw him running from the car and confirmed he's indeed the same guy we're looking for," an officer radioed to dispatch from the gas station.

The dispatcher confirmed the name and put it out over the radio: "The suspect is going to be John Elifritz. ... A couple of calls earlier today he had a knife to his throat. He was ranting about his wife and daughter being murdered. We disengaged from that on East."

The two officers who fired the rubber rounds at Elifritz are Richard Bailey and Justin Damerville. The others who shot lethal rounds are: Officers Kameron Fender, Alexandru Martiniuc, Bradley Nutting, Chad Phifer and Andrew Polas, and county Deputy Aaron Siczkowski.

There were four cameras on the main floor of the shelter that caught the shooting and provide a more comprehensive picture of what occurred, said Mike Giering, the shelter's executive director who turned the videos over to police.

Elifritz struggled with methamphetamine abuse and had a criminal history that included multiple convictions for stealing cars.

Earlier this month, the Police Bureau invited outside trainers from the Police Executive Research Forum to instruct bureau trainers on how to teach patrol officers to de-escalate encounters with people who don't have guns but are armed with knives, bats or other objects.

Officers who slow down, collect as much information as possible, use distance and cover and spend time patiently communicating are likely to have a better outcome, said Tom Wilson, a retired patrol bureau chief from a Maryland police agency.

An internal police administrative investigation is continuing into the Elifritz shooting.

The Portland Tribune

Construction at Record High

By Jules Rogers

May 28, 2018

Housing affordability also still high, new study from Downtown Clean & Safe finds

Although the boom cranes are still up in record numbers, that isn't helping affordability, according to a new study.

Downtown Clean & Safe released its annual Development/Redevelopment Report in late May, finding that although a record number of buildings are under construction, affordability is still at risk in every downtown neighborhood.

The report, prepared by Heritage Consulting Group, intended to provide a five-year window on real estate development in downtown Portland. It included the districts of Downtown, West End, University, River, South Waterfront, Central Eastside and the Lloyd.

It found that while hotel construction is up, the number of multifamily housing units in the pipeline is down due to last year's Inclusionary Housing policy.

"As in recent years, the real estate marketplace has been extraordinarily active in a large number of projects across all sectors in nearly every geographic area of the city and region. With high demand and less supply, particularly within the housing sector, this has presented a challenge around affordability," the study read. "Current projects providing notable additional supply may mitigate this challenge in the longer term, while the city continues to explore strategies to spur additional housing development."

The annual report, which began more than 15 years ago, shows there are 48 active construction projects in the Central City, a record number that tops last year's 45 projects.

"Seeing continued investment and growth across the Central City is encouraging," said Peter Andrews, vice president of Melvin Mark Brokerage and chair of the Downtown Clean & Safe board of directors. "This report is a critical reminder that downtown Portland is a vibrant, thriving place to live, work and play, but there is still work to do when it comes to housing affordability throughout the city."

The report is created by Downtown Clean & Safe to gauge economic vitality and activity in the Central City. It informs developers, real estate brokers, property managers, property owners, prospective tenants, institutional investors and other business stakeholders.

Unaffordability

The study found persistent housing affordability challenges across all the downtown neighborhoods.

Roughly 5,200 residential units have been built in the Central City since 2011, with another 3,300 units currently under construction and an additional 2,000 units in the design phase — but only 10 percent of those units are considered affordable compared to median family income.

The study named the 2017 Inclusionary Housing (IH) policy as a major factor.

Prior to IH going into effect in February 2017, developers submitted permits for 19,000 units citywide in a rush to permit projects to ensure financial viability. During the first year of the program, only 17 new permits were filed, signaling the city should reevaluate both the inclusion rate and the incentives offered under the program to make the requirements more effective at incentivizing supply of additional housing to meet the incredible demand, the study said.

Tourism strong

Tourism is still a huge economic indicator of the city that's trending worldwide. In the last five years, 1,756 hotel rooms were added and nine hotels are under construction with plans to add another 1,500 more room over the next two years — including the recently opened Porter Hotel and the upcoming Hyatt Regency at the Convention Center.

"Portland is in the midst of a significant period of hotel growth that will result in more than 3,000 new hotel rooms in the city center by the end of 2019," said Jeff Miller, president and CEO of Travel Portland and a Downtown Clean & Safe board member. "These additional rooms not only help meet business and tourist visitor demand, but, for the local market, they directly expand on the more than 35,000 tourism-related jobs the industry already supports in Portland, which shows the tangible impact the tourism industry has on the Portland community."

Region's Leaders Split on Metro Affordable Housing Bond

By Jim Redden

May 29, 2018

The Metro Council will hold a work session on a possible \$625.6 million affordable housing bond on Tuesday afternoon.

Local elected leaders in the Portland area are divided over Metro's potential affordable housing measure, with some showing full-bore support while others are voicing serious reservations.

The elected regional government is considering referring a \$652.8 million property tax bond to the November 2018 ballot to help purchase and build thousands of affordable housing units. The Metro Council will hold a work session on a framework for the measure on Tuesday afternoon, May 29, and has scheduled a referral vote on June 7.

Although the measure has yet to be finalized, it is already supported by Multnomah County Chair Deborah Kafoury, Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler, Milwaukie Mayor Mark Gamba, and Forest Grove Mayor Peter Truax.

"These kinds of region-wide efforts are essential to solving our housing emergency," Wheeler communications director Michael Cox said on his behalf.

However, some leaders either oppose the bond or are leaning against it. They include Washington County Chair Andy Duyck, Lake Oswego Mayor Kent Studebaker, and a majority of the Fairview City Council.

During a May 17 briefing on the measure to the Fairview City Council by Metro staff, Councilor Mike Weatherby said increasing property taxes is the wrong way to fund affordable housing.

"It bothers me to tax people who are impoverished. I grew up poor. I plead with you to find another way of dealing with this," Weatherby said.

Still others are undecided and are waiting to see the final version, including Hillsboro Mayor Steve Callaway and Tualatin Mayor Lou Ogden.

"I support the effort to address affordable housing regionally, but I want to wait and see what the final proposal looks like before offering further comments," Callaway told the Pamplin Media Group.

Metro President Tom Hughes first proposed that his government consider a \$500 million affordable housing bond last November. At the time, Hughes said a Metro-commissioned poll showed voters considered solving the affordable housing crisis the region's top priority, and would be willing to tax their properties enough to support a measure of that size.

Since then, Metro has convened two committees to help draft such a measure. One is a stakeholder committee that includes affordable housing and community advocates, along with elected officials and developers. It was charged with addressing such policy issues as who the housing should serve. The other was a technical committee made up of Metro and local governments staffers that advised on such details as the average costs of preserving and building the units.

During the process, the amount of the bond was increased to \$516 million and then to \$625.6 million. One that size would cost the average homeowner in the region \$60 a year for the life of the bond.

Complicating matters is an existing restriction in the Oregon Constitution that prohibits governments from partnering with private businesses on projects funded by such bonds. It prevents the traditional method of building affordable housing, where governments only fund a portion of the projects. That is why Portland only promised to preserve or build 1,300 units with the \$258.4 million affordable housing bond that city voters approved in November 2016. Such an amount would normally result in much more housing.

The 2018 Oregon Legislature recognized the problem and placed a proposed constitutional amendment on the November 2018 ballot to repeal the restriction for affordable housing projects. Voters won't know whether it will apply to the potential Metro ballot before the election, however, because they will both be on the same ballot.

The local elected officials who support the potential Metro measure all say that it is necessary to help solve the unprecedented affordable housing crisis facing the region.

"People in our communities are asking for help everyday. It's clear that this housing crisis is much bigger than just one county. I am thrilled our partners are coming together to invest in safe, decent and affordable housing. We all have to do more," Kafoury told the Pamplin Media Group.

"We have an unprecedented housing affordability crisis in the region. In Milwaukie alone, 43 percent of all renters pay more than 30 percent of their income on housing and nearly a quarter pay more than 50 percent. Over 600 kids attending North Clackamas Schools are homeless. It would be unconscionable to do nothing to address this issue aggressively," Gamba told the Pamplin Media Group.

"I'm probably leaning much in favor of the bond issue. I think the main reason is that I feel there's a good deal more fire power in a region-wide approach to it. We have tried things locally and county-wide, and while they are working somewhat, I don't think it's at the success rate that anybody wants," Truax told the Pamplin Media Group.

Those opposing or leaning against the measure raise numerous questions about it.

During a May 31 briefing on the measure to the Washington County Commission by Metro staff, Duyck complained the proposal would create an unnecessary layer of bureaucracy that would constrain and dilute the voices of local officials on how local funding will be allocated.

"What you have outlined here is a formula for how Metro will provide the money — in essence reinventing the wheel. You have created an entirely new kind of bureaucracy here. (The money) would have to get through that screen before it ever gets to local governments," Duyck said.

Studebaker worries the benefits of the measure will not be distributed fairly. He notes that most Lake Oswego homeowners will pay more than the \$60 a year average because the city's property values are so high. At the same time, there's hardly anywhere to build affordable housing there.

"I am sympathetic with the need for lower-income housing. But I doubt much of the bond proceeds will come to Lake Oswego because of our lack of available land or housing that can be renovated to be lower-income housing," Studebaker told the Pamplin Media Group.

In addition to worrying that Lake Oswego won't get its fair share of affordable housing, Studebaker is also concerned the current proposal sets aside a maximum of 7 percent of the bond proceeds for administration and 10 percent for land purchases.

"There is about 17 percent of the bond that is kept out for things like administration. I am not confident that government will do the job economically or will be able to maintain the properties for the amounts anticipated in the bond." Studebaker said.

Studebaker also noted that the highest maximum number of units — 3,900 — will only be built or preserved if the proposed state constitutional amendment passes. If not, the total falls to just 2,400.

"If that doesn't pass, the number of homes that can be brought into the program drops substantially," Studebaker said.

Although he is undecided, Ogden worries that passage of the bond would make voters reluctant to approve other funding requests in the future, including the November 2020 regional transportation funding measure Metro is considering to help fund the proposed MAX line through the Southwest Corridor connecting Portland to Tualatin through Tigard.

"Local governments have their own funding issues. Tualatin voters just passed a local transportation bond. Tigard just voted on a local operating levy, the schools and Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue continue to fund local option levies. There is a tipping point beyond which voters are unable and/or unwilling to pay," Ogden told the Pamplin Media Group.

City Hall Watch: Portland's 2035 Growth Plan Takes Effect

*By Jim Redden
May 29, 2018*

Plus, the City Auditor's Office questions oversight of arts spending and a low-income utility relief program is approved.

The Comprehensive Plan update that will guide growth in Portland over the next 20 years took effect May 24.

The plan and periodic updates are required by state land-use planning laws. It was approved by the City Council last year and subsequently was acknowledged by the state Land Conservation and Development Commission. The council already has approved the first amendment, the Central City Plan.

Parts of the plan were challenged before the LCDC by the Multnomah Neighborhood Association and others. Association leaders now are considering whether to appeal it to the Oregon Court of Appeals.

City arts spending questioned

Portland Auditor Mary Hull Caballero told the City Council that it needs to improve its oversight of spending by the Regional Arts & Culture Council during a May 22 work session.

The audit had been requested by Mayor Ted Wheeler and Commissioner Nick Fish, the city's liaison to the arts community. It found the city had no clear policies for prioritizing arts spending and was not tracking where the funds it gives to the RACC are going.

According to the audit, the city provided \$8.3 million of RACC's \$12 million budget last year, including \$3.3 million from the voter-approved Arts Tax. The council was aware of some of the problems and funded a position to oversee the spending in the budget that take effect July 1. Fish promised to lead a review and revamp of the city's relationship with RACC.

Utility relief program approved

The City Council approved a program to help lower-income renters in multifamily buildings with their water and sewer bills on Wednesday.

The ordinance submitted by Commissioner Nick Fish adds \$640,000 to an existing short-term rent assistance program operated by Home Forward, the county's housing authority. Each qualifying family will be eligible for a \$500 payment, equal to roughly 85 percent of the annual cost of water and sewer services for an apartment, once per year.

"We're very excited, after years and years of work on this, that we've finally cracked the code and will be able to provide even more assistance to needy families," Fish said of the program, which will start in July.

Willamette Week

Portland Neighborhood Bureau, Once Nicknamed the "Island of Misfit Toys," Will Become the Office of Community and Civic Life

*By Rachel Monahan
May 24, 2018*

Portland neighborhoods still have a bureau. But they'll no longer be in the name.

The Portland Office of Neighborhood Involvement has outgrown its name.

The bureau founded in the 1970s to empower neighborhoods has long since become a patchwork quilt of multiple programs that have questionable connection to the original mission.

In fact, city staffers gave the bureau an unflattering nickname: They called it the "Island of Misfit Toys," a city audit disclosed in 2016.

The city's cannabis, liquor and noise issues are handled by the bureau, as well as programs for a wide range of groups, including the New Portlanders program and a Diversity and Civic Leadership Program.

City Commissioner Chloe Eudaly and new bureau director Suk Rhee are attempting to rebrand and refocus the bureau. They have landed on a name to try to meld those disparate tasks together and communicate what the bureau is doing.

The new name is the Office of Community and Civic Life.

"It matches the work the bureau actually does," says Winta Yohannes, a policy adviser in Eudaly's office—"community' to really focus on the fact we're interested in serving all Portlanders, and 'civic' to get to the point of the bureau, which is really to engage the public with government."

The bureau contracted out with Jen Wick of the local firm Fort Wick for the \$25,000 rebranding. The logo features a rainbow of different spokes out in three-quarters of a circle. Today is the soft launch; a new website will go up by July 1.

Any fears (or hopes) that the city would disband the neighborhood associations were misplaced.

"We will continue to support neighborhoods associations," says Yohannes. "They are not our only constituents... We're recognizing all the different ways people organize."

Portland Bureau of Transportation Is Looking to Test Run a Scooter Share Program

*By Shannon Gormley
May 24, 2018*

There's still a chance Portland could get dockless bikes, too.

Portland may get a pilot scooter share program this summer.

After California startup company Lime began hiring in Portland in March, word spread the city was looking into dockless bike and scooter programs to replace or supplement Biketown. Bike Portland reported that the announcement was made at this month's Pedestrian Advisory Committee meeting.

Portland Bureau of Transportation spokesman John Brady tells WW the proposed scooter pilot is completely separate from any future changes to Biketown, and there's still a chance Portland could get dockless bikes.

The scooter pilot is only in the planning stages, so PBOT hasn't finalized any details, including which companies would participate in the trial run.

Dripping Blood From His Neck, a Distraught Man Moved Toward Portland Police Officers With a Knife. Then They Fired.

By Katie Shepherd

May 25, 2018

Surveillance videos show John Elifritz took several quick steps toward police before they fired.

The Portland Police Bureau released its case files and videos that reveal more details about the death of John Andrew Elifritz, 48, who officers shot and killed in a homeless shelter near downtown Portland on April 7.

Surveillance videos from inside the shelter shows Elifritz enter the shelter and begin stabbing himself in the neck with a knife. As he moved toward the back of the room, he dripped blood across the wood floor.

Officers entered and fired several bean bags at Elifritz, but he refused to drop the knife in his hand. He appeared to continue to cut himself with the knife as more than a dozen officers entered the shelter.

The videos shows Elifritz took several quick steps toward police before they fired their weapons.

Witnesses who had been attending an Alcohol Anonymous meeting inside the CityTeam Ministries Portland Shelter told police Elifritz appeared to be having a "psychotic episode" and "was not listening to [officers] at all, that he was incoherent, and obviously mentally ill to do something like this." One witness said he appeared to be "methed out," because he was "fidgety, moving quickly and twitching his body as he moved back and forth to the window like he was paranoid."

The accounts, summarized in police case files which PPB posted online, say that Elifritz entered the shelter without a shirt, asking for a coat or blanket. He grabbed a jacket from a box of clothes and then left the shelter, only to return a few minutes later.

The AA meeting carried on until one attendee noticed Elifritz had a knife held to his own throat, and yelled "Holy shit he's killing himself," according to one of the witnesses. Someone ran to the shelter door and shouted to the police who were searching the area for Elifritz after he had crashed a stolen car nearby.

That's when officers entered the shelter.

Elifritz's family filed a lawsuit against the City of Portland and the individual officers who fired their guns on May 22, claiming the officers acted unlawfully and were engaged in a pattern of excessive force against people suffering from mental illness.

One Year After a Double Slaying on a MAX Train, Portlanders Gather to Remember the Two Men Killed Defending Teenage Girls

*By AJ Earl
May 27, 2018*

"Let's fight bigotry and racism and hate inside of each one of us."

Gathering at the foot of the freshly painted stairs and ramps leading to the Hollywood Transit Center MAX stop, hundreds of Portlanders paused Saturday evening to remember the men killed last May in a stabbing that blindsided and horrified this city.

The memorial took place exactly one year after the attack by Jeremy Christian that killed Taliesin Myrddin Namkai-Meche and Ricky Best and seriously wounded Micah Fletcher after they interrupted his racial tirade against two young women.

Members of Best's and Namkai-Meche's families attended the event. So did Dyjuana Hudson, the mother of one of the teenage girls targeted by Christian.

The dedication of a mural at the transit center marked the first time the city has come together in remembrance since the vigils held in the immediate aftermath of the attacks.

The event was organized to coincide with the exact moment of the attacks.

"We come together to commemorate the heroism of that fateful day, one year ago and the community we saw play out on the walls on the transit center and the days that followed," said Maura White of the neighborhood organization Hollywood Boosters.

Wajdi Said of the Muslim Educational Trust spoke against the racism that appeared to motivate the attacks.

"Let's fight bigotry and racism and hate inside of each one of us, let us fight that racism that divides us against each other, my dear brothers and sisters," he said.

Ricky Best's priest, Father Rick Paperini of the Christ The King Catholic Church in Milwaukie, spoke on his relationship to Best and his family.

"I believe it was C.S. Lewis that once wrote, 'When we love somebody intensely, the sense of loss is equally intense.' When you love somebody intensely, as I know the Best family loved Rick, then the sense of loss is going to be incredibly difficult," Paperini said, "and yet the ironic thing is that we continue to love in spite of the pain loss just might bring."

The mural dedicated at today's ceremony was the result of months of deliberation, first prompted after an impromptu memorial grew rapidly and became the subject of calls for something more permanent. Ultimately, an advisory committee chose Sarah Farahat to lead the creation of the final design for the memorial dedicated today.

Farahat described the creative process behind the memorial as "both joyful and heavy."

"It's a lot of responsibility," said Farahat. She designed the mural as a cascade of colors leading up the ramp to the MAX station. "I was thinking about the passage of time, so this is supposed to be the end of the day transitioning into night, [and] the back of the mural will be a night sky."

A procession filed toward the mural to begin leaving flowers. Some had brought their own flowers, and some spoke to the family members who gathered near the base of the mural.

Among them was Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler, whose term began less than six months before the attack. He quietly placed a flower at the base of the mural.

"In the moment, it was nearly damned impossible," Wheeler told WW last night. "It was an event that shook this city to its core. It surfaced hatred that a lot of people knew existed in this community that maybe didn't want to believe existed in this community."

Wheeler says he finds strength in the actions of the three men who intervened on the train.

"People continue to be inspired by Ricky and Taliesin and Micah and they remember the strength of the young women who were subjected to so much vitriol and hate speech," he said. "Here you have the families today standing strong and I think that gives us all strength and encouragement. I'm leaving here feeling like a stronger, better, more understanding person."

Some 20 feet above where Wheeler stood, quotes from Taliesin Myrddin Namkai-Meche and Ricky Best are now painted onto the place where they died.

"I cannot stand by and do nothing," Best's quote reads.

"Tell everyone on the train I love them," reads Namkai-Meche's.

The Portland Mercury

Portland Police Release New Videos and Witness Interviews from Elifritz Shooting

*By Alex Zielinski
May 25, 2018*

Newly released evidence from the Portland Police Bureau has shed more light on the fatal police shooting of John Elifritz the evening of April 7.

This evening, PPB released nearly 700 pages of investigative material related to the Elifritz shooting—including interviews with witnesses, interviews with officers at the scene, autopsy notes, and evidence descriptions—including a photo of the bloody knife Elifritz used on his own neck.

A quick refresher on what the public already knew before this evening's data dump: On a rainy Saturday evening, Elifritz, 48, was shot at the Cityteam Ministries homeless shelter by a number of Portland police officers and one Multnomah County deputy. He had entered the SE Grand Ave. shelter shortly after crashing a stolen car on SE Martin Luther King, Jr. Ave., interrupting an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting being held inside.

Elifritz first entered the shelter around 7:30 pm, shirtless. A staff member offered him a jacket and he left. At around 7:55 pm, Elifritz returned, appearing suicidal. By 8 pm, Elifritz had been fatally shot by police officers inside the shelter.

A month after this shooting, a Multnomah County grand jury ruled that all law enforcement officials involved in the shooting—one county deputy and seven Portland police officers—were justified in their deadly use of force. The transcript of that grand jury has yet to be made public. This Wednesday, Elifritz's ex-wife filed a civil rights federal lawsuit against the PPB for his death.

Until this evening, the public has only seen clips from one shaky cellphone video that captured the chaos and heard varied witness testimony of the incident, leaving dozens of unanswered questions. Videos released through public records requests today, captured by Cityteam Ministries' surveillance cameras and police car dashcams, help fill in some of the missing gaps.

Surveillance video captures Elifritz returning to Cityteam Ministries holding a knife in his right hand. Once inside the door, another camera captures Elifritz making cutting motions at his neck while he looks outside the front window. That's when the thirty or so men inside the shelter—most of them sitting in chairs, paying attention to the Alcoholics Anonymous meeting—start turning around to see what's going on. Within seconds, people have jumped to their feet, some trying to assist Elifritz and others using their chairs to shield themselves from him. While he's not obviously threatening anyone with the knife (aside from himself), Elifritz staggers unnaturally across the room, looking uncertain. His neck is covered with blood.

The video has no audio. But, in interviews with the PPB released today, witnesses say Elifritz was saying something along the lines of: "I just killed my family and they are going to kill me," "I want to die," and "Shoot me," and "They killed my family, I'm going to kill myself." In interviews, a few witnesses assume he is either on some kind of drug or having a psychotic episode.

"He was slashing towards his face and then stabbing himself in the neck," said one unidentified witness. "He had scared the shit out of all the guys working there."

Based on the video timestamp, ten or so officers enter the shelter's front door around 7:58. Witnesses say officers yelled at Elifritz to drop his knife while telling occupants to drop to the floor (one witness said it felt like "a federal prison or something").

Seconds into entering, officers begin firing non-lethal, or "bean bag," bullets at Elifritz. According to PPB's timeline, Elifritz continues to stab himself in the neck. Witnesses say he was unfazed by the non-lethal shots.

"I see him get impacted but it wasn't enough to knock him over or do anything," recalled a witness. "It kind of seemed to piss him off."

That's when Elifritz begins walking towards the wall of armed officers, knife in hand. When he gets about six feet away from the officers, he crumples. It's clear he has been shot.

In an examination by Oregon State Medical Examiner Dr. Cliff Nelson, it appears Elifritz suffered nine gunshot wounds. Nelson determined that the three bullets to his chest were fatal.

There is no information on whether or not Elifritz had drugs in his system during the time of his death.

Before entering the Cityteam Ministries the second time, Elifritz had walked to a Jackson Food Store on SE Grand, where he stood in the doorway for a while. PPB interviewed Carletta Davis, an Jackson employee who was working at the time. In her interview, Davis said Elifritz had told her he wanted to "kill a cop."

"That part eats at me, eats at me every day," Davis said.

Davis said she's worked at that store for 12 years, and has seen a number of intoxicated and mentally ill people in and around the store. But Elifritz was different. "Just something in him just said something wasn't right," she told a PPB officer. "I did not know but just something."

The Mounting Legal Fight Over How Portland Cops Manage Protests

By Alex Zielinski

May 23, 2018

As more protesters push back, will PPB change its ways?

Jeremy Ibarra wasn't planning on suing the Portland Police Bureau.

But after the 35-year-old man was arrested during a chaotic June 2017 protest—shortly after officers corralled him and at least 200 others in a group and announced they were all being detained—he and his lawyers are prepared to hold the bureau accountable. In doing so, they could accelerate a growing legal fight to ban this type of mass detention at protests.

Ibarra went to downtown Portland's Chapman Square on June 4 as a counter-protester, hoping to speak out against the pro-Trump rally taking place across the street at Terry Schunk Plaza. In what's increasingly becoming the standard for Portland protests, police showed up in head-to-toe tactical gear. According to PPB, counter-protesters threw a bottle of soda and a brick at the officers. In response, PPB formed a human lasso around some 200 protesters and announced via loudspeaker that everyone inside the circle was being detained. Officers shot paintball-style bullets filled with pepper and flash bangs at the crowd while others directed protesters to disperse, according to protester testimony. When Ibarra tried to leave the crowd, he was arrested for disorderly conduct.

Instead of taking a plea deal from the Multnomah County District Attorney, Ibarra opted for a trial by jury—an unusual path for a misdemeanor charge. The decision worked in his favor: By the end of the week-long trial, the jury sided with Ibarra and issued a not guilty verdict. But Ibarra wasn't going to leave it at that.

Days after the ruling, Ibarra's attorneys filed a tort claim against PPB, arguing that the entire premise of Ibarra's arrest—being held along with hundreds of people for the actions of a select few—was unconstitutional.

“The City clearly based their mass detention not on probable cause,” the tort reads. “The overbreadth of the detention caused the illegal arrest of Mr. Ibarra.”

The police tactic in question, often called “kettling,” isn't new. New York officers kettled protesters during the 2004 Republican National Convention, DC Metropolitan Police kettled hundreds who participated in the January 2016 Inauguration Day protests, and St. Louis police were recently accused of kettling protesters following the acquittal of an officer who fatally shot a civilian. In 2014, 70 or so people were kettled by Portland police during a protest over the non-indictment of Ferguson, Missouri, Police Officer Darren Wilson. (Included in that kettle was then-Mercury News Editor Denis C. Theriault, who was reporting on the protest.) A new wave of protests spurred by the election of Donald Trump, however, has renewed the public's pushback on kettling tactics.

“They're not doing anything new, there's just new people participating in protests,” says Juan C. Chavez, Ibarra's attorney. “We're seeing scrutiny where there should have been for a while.”

That scrutiny is also coming from the ACLU of Oregon, who filed a class action lawsuit against PPB after the June 4 protest, specifically for the kettle-style mass detention.

“Kettling protesters without probable cause and/or individualized suspicion violates the Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments of the United States Constitution,” reads the ACLU’s complaint, filed last November, that names five people who were caught in the kettle as plaintiffs.

Chavez says these mounting lawsuits against the city and its police force will hopefully encourage the PPB to reconsider how it handles large crowds. Another thing that could help: Having more protesters like Ibarra taking their misdemeanor protest charges to court—and winning. The cost of sending county prosecutors to fight petty charges in court adds up, as does pulling officers off the clock to testify against protesters.

“So often, district attorneys file these cases because they know they won’t get sued,” says Chavez. “But they have to answer to us now. Mr. Ibarra wants to show others that they also have rights, that they can fight back.”

They can, that is, if those cases even make it as far as the district attorney’s office. In April 2017, the Mercury found that the majority of protest-related arrests in Portland since Trump’s election had been rejected by the office of Multnomah County District Attorney Rod Underhill—a signal that these arrests were more symbolic than they were lawful.

Between unnecessary arrests, the PPB’s tactical armor, and kettling, some civil rights lawyers say Portland police are increasingly using scare tactics to keep people from attending protests.

Lisa Pardini, a Portland defense attorney who’s represented protesters, calls PPB’s militarized gear “bizarrely unnecessary” and believes the look provokes some of the violent action that takes place at protests. “When you’re dressed in that battle gear, it’s hard not to [be provoked],” Pardini says.

That only adds to the slippery slope of unconstitutional allegations. If kettling qualifies as protest deterrence, then the PPB could also be accused of violating Portlanders’ First Amendment rights.

Chavez says it shouldn’t be that difficult for the PPB to follow rules upheld by Oregon and the US Constitution.

“We want this practice to stop. We want people to be able to go to a protest without getting tear-gassed and without being arrested because one person allegedly threw something,” he says. “It’s as simple as that.”

Hall Monitor: Calculated Risk

*By Alex Zielinski
May 23, 2018*

A New Chapter of Accountability in City Hall

May 4 was the last day of work for Risk Manager Kate Wood.

Wood’s departure, which went largely unnoticed in the recent rush of bureau resignations, has (hopefully) allowed for a new chapter of accountability in city hall. According to city staff, that’s because Wood refused to do a key part of her job: listening to what the city calls “fair and moral” claims.

These types of claims come from citizens who believe they’ve incurred unfair expenses at the hands of city employees—for instance, if a city vehicle runs over a bike, or if a city water leak floods someone’s basement with sewage. Under Portland’s “fair and moral obligations” to its

citizens, a rule written into the city charter in 1946, the city is responsible for compensating citizens for these kind of claims—that is, if a committee finds the claims to be justified.

At least, that was the case until 1990, when Portland City Council transferred the responsibility to the city's Risk Management Division. This reshuffling was meant to streamline the process. It didn't happen. Risk Management staff instead ignored these claims—and their legal obligation to hear them—for 25 years.

Then, in September 2016, Nguyet Le's house blew up. Le owned a rental home that was wrecked by Portland police explosives after a man suspected of murder barricaded himself inside. Le was left with \$25,000 in damages and more than \$4,300 in lost rent.

When she brought her complaints to the city, the Risk Management office offered \$5,000 and shrugged, claiming Le's only other option was to sue the city for restitution.

But Portland Ombudsman Margie Sollinger, whose job it is to help citizens wronged by the city, reminded city council that this decision blatantly breaks the law. According to the city charter, Le is owed a committee hearing.

Thanks to Sollinger's wrangling, Le's case became the first heard by a claims committee in over two decades. At her April 6 hearing, orchestrated by Sollinger and chaired by City Auditor Mary Hull Caballero and Commissioner Amanda Fritz, Le detailed the extent of her financial losses. "Please help me," she asked, presenting various cost estimates from contractors.

Wood sat at one end of the table. After Le left the room, Wood announced that since joining Risk Management in 2007, she had never been asked to review these claims—and wasn't going to start doing it now. "It's unfamiliar to us. It's not work that we've agreed to do," Wood said.

"You may not have been doing this before, but you were required to," Hull Caballero reminded Wood. "You are relitigating a decision that has already been made."

Wood wasn't having it. But neither were the elected officials in the room—and they didn't try to mask it. "I'm at the end of my patience," Hull Caballero told Wood.

It was an awkward, confusing moment. No matter how many times Wood was told to do her job, she deflected. The meeting was inconclusive, and a decision to do... well, anything was indefinitely put on hold.

Less than a month after the meeting took place, Wood resigned.

This twist triggered a sigh of relief among city staff involved with the tangle she'd created. Instead of trying to work around a person rigidly stuck in their ways, the city can plow forward with a new manager who'll be open to hearing citizen claims.

This week, city commissioners will vote to issue a \$25,514 check to Le for the irrevocable damage to her property.

OPB

Tall Buildings Could Throw Shade on Portland's Chinatown-Japantown District

*By Amelia Templeton
May 28, 2018*

A new tower — or two, or three — could be coming to Portland's New Chinatown-Japantown historic district.

In an effort to spur development in the struggling commercial district, Portland City Council voted Thursday to give developers the option of building taller buildings there.

The vote divided the City Council, with Mayor Ted Wheeler, Commissioners Dan Saltzman and Chloe Eudaly arguing that development would give the neighborhood a much-needed boost, while Commissioner Amanda Fritz argued it would effectively destroy it.

“We need to infuse old town Japantown with activity. And there is none there now. We need people to live there,” Saltzman said.

Fritz appeared visibly shaken as she cast her vote and called it a sad day.

“I think this is a serious mistake that is going to repeat the mistakes that previous councils made in Albina, destroying a historic district and a cultural district,” Fritz said.

Commissioner Nick Fish joined Fritz in voting against the proposal.

The council made the height changes in amendments it adopted to the 2035 Central City Plan, the city's blueprint for new development downtown and in the city's inner core.

The plan includes new height and design guidelines intended to preserve the character of the historic district, which is Oregon's largest Chinatown.

The city's current development plan, adopted in 1988, allows bona fide skyscrapers — up to 350 feet, or approximately 35 stories — in much of the new Chinatown-Japantown historic district.

The city's planning and sustainability commission had recommended council reduce the allowed heights across the district in the 2035 plan to 125 feet or about 10 stories, to better match the existing historic buildings there, which top out at around seven stories.

The council had previously indicated it would set heights at 160 feet for much of the neighborhood.

But in Wednesday's vote, the council voted to break from that standard and allow buildings up to 200 feet in two different places.

The first site, known as Block 33, is an empty parking lot between Fourth and Fifth avenues, not far from the historic Chinatown gate.

It belongs to developer Guardian Real Estate Services. The company plans to build an apartment tower and retail space.

The developer has pushed the council to allow for a taller building there, with the support of the Downtown Neighborhood Association.

“Development on Block 33 represents a potentially catalytic development site for our neighborhood,” the group wrote.

The council made the additional height a bonus that Guardian can earn in exchange for including affordable housing units in the building. Guardian will get an additional density bonus if all the development above the ground floor of the building is residential.

The council's more controversial move was increasing the building heights allowed on four blocks that make up the northern half of the historic district, immediately adjacent to the city's Lan Su Chinese Garden.

A majority of the council voted to approve heights of up to 200 feet there — still a significant reduction from the 425 feet allowed in the 1988 plan. Saltzman introduced the amendment.

Lawyers for the Menashe family, which owns a portion of the blocks in question, had pushed for it, arguing it wasn't fair for the council to award more height to the Lot 33 project than it was allowing in other parts of the neighborhood.

Community groups and the Old Town Neighborhood Association opposed the amendment, citing concerns about the impact to the garden.

Lan Su is one of just six classical Chinese gardens in North America. The garden's executive director, Lisa James, urged the council to vote against taller buildings, calling the garden more than just a tourist attraction.

"These walls of 200' towers directly across the street to the West of the garden will undeniably have a detrimental effect on our long-term viability and that of our legitimate botanical collection," James wrote.

But council members who favored the height increases said safeguards are in place to ensure that any new building won't shade the garden.

New developments in the historic district are required to conduct and comply with a shade study, among other requirements.

"I'm not buying many of these arguments," said Commissioner Chloe Eudaly. "I have been assured by PBS staff that we can prevent any impact to the garden."

Staffers say the shade study and other design requirements in the historic district make it unlikely 200-foot tall buildings will actually get built next to Lan Su.

"We're not going to let shadows destroy the garden," said Michel Cox, a spokesman for Wheeler.

A Year After Portland MAX Stabbing, A Mural To Remember And Grieve

*By Ericka Cruz Guevarra
May 26, 2018*

There's a mural where there once wasn't at the site of the deadly MAX train stabbing that happened one year ago Saturday.

That's when the Hollywood Transit Center became the site of a hate crime that drew national attention and where, now, a mural with symbols of grieving and healing are deemed necessary.

"I wanted to show both the symbol of a hope of our city growing together and in service to each other and also recognizing there is still so much grief we hold as a community," said Egyptian-

American artist Sarah Farahat in April. TriMet picked Farahat's design for the Hollywood Transit Center.

The mural features a Western peony, which is known to hold medical properties used to aid in the grieving process. Its background colors represent the shift from sunset to night.

The stabbing drew national attention in part because the stabbings took place on the eve of Ramadan. Prosecutors have alleged Jeremy Christian, the man accused of killing two people onboard the train last spring, shouted racial slurs at two African-American women on the light-rail train. One of the women wore a hijab.

Jury selection for Christian's case will begin June 24, 2019. The trial is expected to last several weeks, ending July 26, 2019.

"I and so many others were shocked by this horrible attack and by the racially-motivated harassment against young people of color that preceded it," said Portland Bureau of Transportation Director Leah Treat in a statement. "We believe in a world where everyone can live and trade; freely, without fear of discrimination, exclusion or harm."

The stabbing also highlighted the racial dynamics of liberal Portland. In the immediate aftermath of the stabbing, OPB interviewed people of color who said fear is not a new feeling for many in Portland's communities of color, though the TriMet attacks may have amplified it.

"In terms of conversation, we're all scared really," Dana Ghazi told OPB. "We feel there is this message that 'You're not welcome here, no matter what you do.'"

Man Shot At Portland Homeless Shelter Moved Toward Officers With Knife, Video Shows

*By Ericka Cruz Guevarra and Dirk VanderHart
May 28, 2018*

Documents from an internal Portland Police Bureau review into the shooting death of a man inside a Southeast Portland homeless shelter last month show John Elifritz was cutting himself with a knife, ignoring police commands and "acting like he was methoded out," in the words of one witness, in the moments before he was shot nine times by police.

Nearly 700 pages of documents from an internal Police Review Board (PRB) review released late Friday include interviews with witnesses and law enforcement officers.

An autopsy found Elifritz sustained nine gunshot wounds and that he'd sliced himself in the neck deep enough to hit muscle.

Officers' bullets hit his left thigh, left little finger, right hand, abdomen, chest, right lung, shoulder and clavicle. "The combination of gunshot wounds to the chest was fatal," a police summary of the autopsy indicates.

The documents state Elifritz first came into the shelter shirtless and demanding clothing. He got a jacket and left, only to return a few minutes later.

According to one witness, Elifritz was twitching and fidgeting and "acting like he was methoded out."

“[The witness] clarified that method out meant the man was fidgety, moving quickly and twitching his body as he moved back and forth to the window like he was paranoid,” according to a law enforcement officer’s summary of a witness interview.

Another witness described Elifritz stabbing himself inside the shelter with what looked like a box cutter or a knife and saw “blood shooting out.”

“The man was cutting with his right hand/arm from around his ear section down towards his Adams apple. He then stabbed himself in the neck,” according to a witness. Videos from the shelter surveillance system show guests at the shelter scrambling for the front door.

“He started walking toward us holding the knife,” Fox said. Elifritz was “15ish feet away maybe” when he began walking toward police, Fox said. He was 7 or 8 feet away, the officer guessed, when lethal shots were fired.

Elifritz was shot and killed inside the Cityteam Ministries Portland Shelter on April 7 after police pursued him as a suspect in a carjacking. Seven Portland Police officers and one Multnomah County Sheriff’s deputy were involved in the shooting.

“We think the evidence supports that John Elifritz was in crisis, and instead of de-escalating the situation — and again consistent with the Department of Justice’s findings that the PPB has a significant issue as it relates to treating individuals in mental health crisis — I mean, nothing has changed,” said Andrew M. Stroth, the attorney representing Elifritz’s family.

“The new evidence that PPB is sharing supports our theory that it was an unjustified shooting of a man in mental health distress,” Stroth said.

Police and witnesses used various terms to describe Elifritz’s movements in the final seconds before the gunfire. Sgt. Roger Axthelm, another witness, told investigators Elifritz “charged” officers. Officer Timothy Ferguson said Elifritz moved “in pretty fast rapid motion.”

A cell phone video shot by someone inside the shelter prompted outrage in the days after the shooting because it appears to show Elifritz standing still or moving slowly when the sound of gunshots rings out. Surveillance videos released Friday by police do not contain sound. They show Elifritz, knife in hand, moving quickly toward the door and officers.

In all, eight law enforcement officers fired on Elifritz with lethal rounds. At least four of the officers involved have made news previously for on-duty incidents, including one whose work in a 2010 case was cited in the U.S. Department of Justice’s investigation that found a pattern of excessive use of force by Portland Police Bureau, particularly with people suffering from mental health problems.

Portland Detective Daniel Andrew interviewed a witness who attended as 12-step meeting at the shelter that night and witnessed police shoot Elifritz.

In the report, Andrew said he asked the man, who is homeless, his overall view of what he had seen during the incident.

“It’s unfortunate but I don’t see how it could have ended any other way,” the man told Andrew. “I don’t want to say the shooting was justified because a guy died, but I don’t see how they could have handled it any differently ... They did what I would hope they would do to resolve the situation without lethal force with consideration for 30 other people that were in danger.”

According to the autopsy report conducted by Dr. Cliff Nelson with the Oregon State Medical Examiner’s Office, Elifritz’s stab wounds incised through the skin and into the muscle. Elifritz had incisions totaling 6 inches in length, the report states.

On Tuesday night, the lawyer representing Elifritz's wife and daughter filed a federal civil rights lawsuit against the city of Portland and the eight individual law enforcement officers involved. The lawsuit argues police killed Elifritz without legal justification and that unconstitutional policies and practices at the bureau result in unjustified officer-involved shootings of people suffering from mental health crises.

OPB's review of nearly 600 pages from Elifritz's Oregon Department of Corrections file revealed a long, storied history of run ins with police. Some of those run-ins have parallels to Elifritz's modus operandi the day he was killed. They raised questions about how much of that officers knew the day they killed him and whether that factored into their response in the shelter.

By the time police fired the fatal rounds on April 7, they'd been dealing with Elifritz for hours.

Shortly after 2:30 p.m. that day, he'd called 911 from a Southeast Portland intersection, erroneously reporting that his wife and child had been murdered.

When officers responded to the call, they reported Elifritz appeared suicidal. He held a knife to his own throat, and when he eventually fled from officers, they didn't pursue. Police have said they feared the situation would escalate if they chased Elifritz down.

Responding officers planned to refer the incident to the police bureau's Behavioral Health Unit, which specializes in dealing with people in crisis. But there was a problem: It was Saturday, and the unit operated Tuesday through Friday.

In the hours that followed, Elifritz appeared in police reports again and again.

Roughly two hours after his 911 call, police say Elifritz pulled a woman from her Honda outside of the Maple Leaf Restaurant on Southeast Foster Road, fleeing in the vehicle.

By 7:20 p.m., he was menacing another driver in North Portland. Minutes later, he'd crashed the car near the intersection of Southeast Martin Luther King Boulevard and Stark Street.

He stopped first in the door of Cityteam Ministries, "knife in hand," police say. He entered the shelter to grab some coats, then left, crossed the street and entered the nearby Jackson Food Store.

At 7:56 p.m., he came back to the homeless shelter, slashing his neck with a knife and menacing the congregants within. The first police officers entered the building at 7:59 p.m., according to a police timeline, though officers had amassed outside minutes before, striking the man repeatedly with less-lethal rounds.

At 8 p.m., police fired the shots that killed him.

Among the many interviewees in the nearly 700-page investigatory file is a man named Chuck Calhoun, who was in the Maple Leaf Restaurant when Elifritz walked in around 4:30 p.m. Calhoun told police Elifritz appeared in distress, asking whether it was "soup Saturday." Soon, he "kind of bolted."

Calhoun said he watched as Elifritz pulled a woman out of her Honda CR-V outside of the diner, then fled. But Calhoun also told police he wished things had ended differently for Elifritz.

"I know you guys felt like a policy but it would just be nice if there was a way of taking this man down without, you know ..." Calhoun said, according to an interview transcript. "... I mean he's a husband, he's a father of a 12-year-old girl, you know?"

Elifritz's Criminal History Raises Questions About What Officers Knew

By Conrad Wilson and Ericka Cruz Guevarra
May 23, 2018

Before John Elifritz was shot and killed by police at a Portland homeless shelter last month, he was a known criminal with an extensive history, dating back to 1988.

Over the years, Elifritz repeatedly led police on high speed and sometimes lengthy chases. He routinely violated his parole. In prison, he was known as a member of the European Kindred, a white supremacy group.

A review of nearly 600 pages from Elifritz's Oregon Department of Corrections file also highlights one important question that remains unanswered: What did Portland Police know about his criminal history on the day they shot and killed him, and did that history factor into the way officers responded?

Portland Police declined to comment on Elifritz's criminal history and their actions. But some answers could be available as early as Friday, when the bureau plans to release video and investigative documents related to the shooting.

Despite Elifritz's lengthy criminal record, Chicago-based civil rights attorney Andrew Stroth — who is representing Elifritz's estate — said nothing in the past justifies what he called an unconstitutional shooting that highlights institutional problems at the Portland Police Bureau.

On Wednesday, Stroth announced a federal civil rights lawsuit against the city of Portland and the eight officers involved in the April 7 shooting at the Cityteam Ministries Portland Shelter.

“Background doesn't matter,” Stroth told OPB. “The police stormed into that homeless shelter, shot and killed John Elifritz in a military-style fashion that was completely unwarranted, no attempt to de-escalate. Again, his potential criminal background doesn't matter at all.”

Hours before Elifritz was killed, police say he attempted but failed at one carjacking and then successfully stole a woman's Honda CR-V. Calls to emergency dispatchers continued to come in about Elifritz, who was described by one caller as appearing to be drunk or high.

State records show parallels between the incidents that led up to his death and decades of criminal behavior.

On Sept. 25, 1994, for example, Elifritz was in The Dalles when police tried to arrest him, according to a document in the file.

Days earlier, the U.S. attorney's office had indicted Elifritz secretly as a co-defendant in the robbery and firebombing of a jewelry store in Keizer.

But when officers tried to arrest him, Elifritz led law enforcement on a high-speed vehicle chase from Hood River to Portland, where he was subsequently arrested and charged with unauthorized use of a vehicle and possession of a stolen vehicle. Those federal charges against Elifritz were ultimately dismissed.

On May 28, 1996, Elifritz was arrested for stealing a vehicle from the parking lot of Portland's Cleveland High School, according to a document in the corrections file: “Officers spotted the vehicle and recognized it from their list of stolen vehicles ‘hotsheet.’”

When officers pursued Elifritz, he sped up to 50 to 60 mph in a residential zone “and began trying to elude officers.” He lost control of the vehicle, making 180- and 360-degree spins. He crashed the vehicle and fled the scene.

“Mr. Elifritz was apprehended and during a search of the vehicle ‘car thief tools of the trade’ were found,” the document states.

On Sept. 13, 2001, at 1:24 a.m., Elifritz almost hit a Portland Police patrol car in Southeast Portland. Officers turned on their lights and sirens and chased him.

“The vehicle continued to accelerate up to 70 mph and was weaving back and forth between the lanes while turning the headlights on and off,” a Department of Corrections document states. “Officers deployed spike strips but the driver was able to avoid them on two occasions but was finally spiked.”

Elifritz ran from the scene but was soon arrested.

On Dec. 21, 2000, his parole officer wrote about a meeting with Elifritz: “He stated that he was a prolific criminal and has done more crimes than anybody knows about.” She also wrote that she had received numerous reports from reliable sources that Elifritz was using drugs.

Elifritz’s run-ins with police continued into the next decade. He’s been convicted of reckless driving and attempting to elude police officers.

While serving time in the Oregon Department of Corrections, Elifritz repeatedly refused to share a cell with African-American men.

In April, Willamette Week reported that Elifritz had been a known member of the European Kindred, citing a 2007 Portland Monthly article that profiled him and other members of the group. The documents in the file confirm that Elifritz’s affiliation with the group was noted by the Oregon Department of Corrections.

In 1998, while in prison, Elifritz was sent to the disciplinary segregation unit, commonly called the “DSU” in corrections documents.

At the time, a corrections officer asked if Elifritz “had a problem living in with a black inmate.”

“Yes, that’s why I’m in DSU,” Elifritz answered. “I can’t live with them. I can only live with my own kind.”

The Portland Police Bureau’s investigation could shed more light onto how much officers knew when they pursued Elifritz into the homeless shelter, and whether his previous gang membership had any effect on how law enforcement responded to him or the intensity of the police response.

Stroth, the family attorney, has said Elifritz was in the midst of a mental health crisis the day he was shot, and witnesses have said Elifritz was in the shelter stabbing himself in the neck with a knife.

This month, a grand jury decided not to charge the seven Portland Police officers and one Multnomah County Sheriff’s deputy involved in the shooting. Transcripts from the four days of testimony are expected to be released in the coming weeks.

At Wednesday’s press conference announcing the lawsuit, Elifritz’s friends and family acknowledged that he had made mistakes earlier in his life.

“John spent time as a very young man in confusion, as many young men do,” said activist and family friend Jeff Thomas Black. “But he was a wonderful father, a wonderful member of the

community who was valued, loved, across this city. John Elifritz was a life worth living. John Elifritz was a life worth saving. Portland Police failed us.”