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JAMES LELAND TIJERINA GUILTY IN TWO SEPARATE CASES

HILLSBORO, Ore- On February 5, 2025, a Washington County jury found James Leland Tijerina, age 31, guilty of rape in the second degree, sexual abuse in the first degree, unlawful sexual penetration in the second degree, unlawful delivery of methamphetamine to a minor (two counts), unlawful delivery of a schedule II controlled substance to a minor (two counts), and recklessly endangering another person in court case number 23CR05555. He was also found guilty of felon in possession of a firearm after a bench trial.

On February 11, 2025, the defendant pleaded guilty to attempted murder in the first degree with a firearm, unlawful use of a weapon with a firearm, felon in possession of a firearm, supplying contraband, unlawful possession of a controlled substance- substantial quantity, and witness tampering in court case number 23CR50076. Deputy District Attorney Rayney Meisel prosecuted the first case and Deputy District Attorneys Alyssa Camp and Mahalee Streblov prosecuted the attempted murder case.

Charges in the first case stem from a February 9, 2022, incident in which the defendant provided fentanyl to a 12-year-old girl. The victim became unresponsive after she and the defendant smoked the drug and the defendant called 911. Investigators learned the victim was a runaway and had spent the last several days with the defendant. After initially denying an inappropriate relationship with the defendant, the victim disclosed several instances of abuse committed by Mr. Tijerina and provided photos and videos that helped corroborate her disclosure.

She told detectives with the Washington County Sheriff's Office that the defendant gave her methamphetamine and fentanyl several times over the course of a few days. She also described how the defendant raped her while she was under the influence of the drugs he provided. During the course of this investigation, a second minor victim known to the defendant also told authorities that he gave her acid following a surgery when she was 12 years old.

The defendant was arrested and indicted by a Washington County grand jury in the first case and was released by the court pending his trial. He failed to appear for a court hearing and on October 10, 2023, while on warrant status, the defendant became involved in a high-speed chase with Washington County deputies. During that high-speed chase, which reached speeds exceeding 100 miles per hour, the defendant fired several rounds directly at a Washington County deputy who was attempting to stop the vehicle. He fired from such a short range that the deputy could see the muzzle flash as the defendant opened fire. The deputy had to swerve away from gunfire while driving at approximately 80 miles per hour. A shelter-in-place order was

given to residents in the City of Gaston during the ordeal. Law enforcement deployed spike strips and eventually stopped the vehicle.

“Deputy Michael Vargas was targeted because he was displaying extreme bravery by trying to stop a vehicle that was posing a danger to the community, despite the obvious risks for his own safety,” said DDA Camp.

The defendant was arrested and taken to the Washington County Jail, where it was discovered that he had smuggled a substantial quantity of fentanyl into the jail.

The defendant then called one of the witnesses from the jail and told her not to appear in order to provide testimony against him. That witness later disclosed being fearful of retaliation if she participated as a witness in the cases.

After the defendant was found guilty on all counts in the first case, he pleaded guilty to all counts in the second case.

“It’s been a long road for everyone involved in and affected by Mr. Tijerina’s actions over the last three years.” DDA Meisel said after the trial. “These guilty verdicts and guilty pleas represent a path to true healing for all who have been victimized by Mr. Tijerina.”

The Washington County District Attorney’s Office commends the bravery of the victims in reporting the defendant’s abuse. This office also acknowledges the work of the Washington County Sheriff’s Office on these cases.

A sentencing hearing is scheduled for February 21, 2025.