



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on July 19, 2023

Former Oregon Gov Freed Felon; He's Now a Person of Interest in Serial Killings.

If H.L. Mencken was right, that “democracy is the theory that the common people know what they want, and deserve to get it good and hard,” then Oregonians are enjoying that benefit of democracy in the mess left behind by former leftist Governor Kate Brown.

In 2021, [Brown famously signed laws](#) that jettisoned math, reading, and writing requirements for graduating high-school seniors and began providing tampons in the boys' restrooms in public schools.

Crazy yes, yet hardly deadly.

But “hold my beer,” Brown said, because I have two more great ideas: [Commute the death sentences](#) of every inmate on Oregon's death row and other dangerous criminals she thought had done enough time.

Result: One of them, police speculate, murdered four women.



AP Images
Kate Brown

The governor's office says the Department of Corrections handled the appraisal of Jesse Lee Calhoun. He is now suspected in the killings of four Portland-area women. <https://t.co/lwzZ7eCz9T>

— Willamette Week (@wweek) [July 19, 2023](#)

Long Rap Sheet

His name is Jesse Lee Calhoun, a career criminal released with 1,026 other convicted felons thanks to the pro-crime Democrat governor.

He's a person of interest, police say, in the murder of four women. Calhoun is back in prison, having violated the terms of his release by resuming criminal activity unrelated to the murders, *Willamette Week* [reported](#):

Several people familiar with ongoing investigations in multiple jurisdictions tell WW that detectives have linked four of the deaths to Jesse Lee Calhoun, whose most recent address is in Portland.

Serial killers are unusual, but Calhoun's case, according to people familiar with it, may be one of a kind.

That's because Calhoun, 38, is among the more than 1,000 inmates whom former Gov. Kate



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Brown granted clemency, allowing them to leave prison early. Of those Brown released early, officials believe Calhoun is the only one whose clemency has since been revoked.

Records show that Calhoun is currently in custody at Snake River Correctional Institution in Ontario, where he was lodged July 6 on charges apparently unrelated to the murders. (The charges on which he is being held do not show up in online court records, which is unusual.) He has not yet been charged in any of the women's deaths, although officials expect that will change.

Calhoun's rap sheet is at least 18 years old, [KOIN6 reported](#). In Baker County, he was convicted of a third-degree assault, and he faced "dozens of additional charges" between 2007 and 2019 "for assault, harassment, drug possession, theft, kidnapping, traffic violations" and other crimes. Many charges were dismissed or pleaded down to lesser crimes:

In 2019, Calhoun was found guilty of assaulting a public safety officer, interfering with a law enforcement animal, burglary and the unauthorized use of a vehicle. Calhoun was sentenced to four years and two months in prison and was not expected to be released until June 2022.

None of that mattered to Brown, who released him, and might, therefore, be responsible for the deaths of the four women.

They are:

- Kristin Smith, 22, found in a wooded area on February 19;
- Charity Perry, 24, found in a culvert on April 24;
- Bridget Leann Ramsey Webster, 31, found in the road on April 30; and,
- Ashley Real, 22, found in a wooded area near a creek on May 7.

Though Portland police said the deaths were unrelated, [KOIN reported](#), the Multnomah County District Attorney's office said they were indeed connected, and officials confirmed Calhoun was a person of interest.

A woman identifying herself as Calhoun's girlfriend told a YouTuber called Velly Ray that Calhoun knew two of the victims and was in a relationship with one of them.

Such was Brown's rush to spring Calhoun from prison that the Multnomah County District Attorney never had a chance to evaluate the commutation, [Willamette Week reported](#).

Free the Felons

Of course, Calhoun wouldn't be a person of interest if Brown hadn't freed him from jail.

In February, Oregon's Court of Appeals ruled that the commutations were lawful. Two district attorneys and the relatives of three victims had sued to stop Brown from giving the felons a pass.

She freed 953 "who were either particularly vulnerable to infection by COVID-19 or had served as firefighters during the raging Labor Day fires of 2020," the [Oregonian reported](#), and another 73 arrested as juveniles but tried as adults.

"The district attorneys and victims filed suit in January in Marion County Circuit Court, arguing that legislators had required Brown to use individual applications when granting clemency, and that the early release hearings referred to the Board of Parole and Post-Prison Supervision constituted an



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unlawful delegation of her power,” the newspaper reported:

Some of the juveniles eligible for release have not yet served 15 years in prison, and while there is no guarantee that parole will be granted, Lane County District Attorney Patty Perlow suggested those future hearings had extended Brown’s authority “beyond her term in office.”

“The Court of Appeals has granted the governor unbridled authority to trample on the rights of victims and limit the authority of the 36 district attorneys to enforce those rights,” Perlow said.

One felon is a murderer [called Kyle Hedquist](#). The 45-year-old was 17 when he shot a girl in the back of the head because she might tell the cops about the crimes he had committed.

But again, loosing felons upon the public wasn’t Brown’s first crackpot decision. [She ended](#) the educational competency requirement because Oregon’s “Black, Latino, Latina, Latinx, Indigenous, Asian, Pacific Islander, Tribal, and students of color” apparently don’t test well.

And the “Menstrual Dignity Act” requires schools to have tampon dispensers in every restroom because boys can menstruate monthly, too.



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