

Victim Impact Statement of Mr. Harwinder Singh Dodd

Case Name: People of the state of Oregon vs. Andrew Ramsey

Case Number: 19CR-03328

Judge: The Honorable Lindsay R. Partridge

Sentencing Date: May 24, 2019

Your Honor, thank you for giving the chance to speak.

My name is Harwinder Singh Dodd and I would like to tell you my story. Andrew Ramsey attacked me without knowing my story - he didn't see me as a person - and he never gave me a chance to speak so I am grateful for that opportunity today.

I came to the United States from India for a better life and opportunities, and I live in Oregon with my wife and children. My daughter is in college. I work very hard and long days as a general store owner to support my family.

I am a follower of the Sikh religion. As a Sikh, I am required to wear a turban and keep my hair and beard uncut as articles of my faith. My hair is a gift from God. I stand out. My turban is a daily reminder of my deep beliefs, including working hard and honestly, sharing with the needy, serving all of humanity, and practicing equality. These articles of faith help form my identity, as they are extensions of my body. I am proud of that, as my identity makes me unique and stand out in a crowd.

On January 14, 2019, I was attacked while working at my store because of who I am. The attacker came to my store and wanted to purchase cigarettes without an I.D. I had to say no to him, and he became angry with him. I then asked him to leave my store, and he refused to leave the parking lot. I asked him to leave the premises, and he proceeded to violently attack me.

He ripped my turban off my head. He pulled my beard. He spat on me. He punched me. He kicked me. He attacked me because of how I look. Because of my turban and beard - my religious articles of faith. He tried to take away my identity.

My turban is a part of my body. When I tie my turban every morning, I tie it with love and care. I never let it touch the floor. I don't touch it with dirty hands. I don't let people touch my turban. When I tie my turban, it goes from being a piece of cloth to becoming my crown and my identity.



Removing my turban is one of the worst, most degrading things that could have happened to me.

When Mr. Ramsey attacked my turban, he attacked my identity and my core. He attacked a part of me that I cannot change the way you can change your clothes or even your hair color. He went so much deeper and attacked my faith, my dignity, and my entire community.

Attacks like this are happening all across the country against people of faith. I thank the court for standing up for me and saying that what he did to me will not be accepted. An attack like this affects everyone in my community and we need to send a message that we will always be welcome and safe in Oregon. This is my home.

As Sikhs, we believe that all human beings are one. We believe that all people are equal, regardless of our many differences. I will always be thankful to the people who helped me. They stepped in to protect me. They saw me as a real person and treated me like one.

Thank you, Your Honor, for giving me the time to speak.

