



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on July 8, 2020

## Oregon Politician Admits Sending Racist Letter to Himself

A failed Oregon politician has admitted that he wrote a racist letter he claimed to have received in the mail, bringing the police investigation into the incident to a close but opening up investigations into his other public assertions.

Hermiston resident Jonathan Lopez, who came in fourth in the May primary for a seat on the Umatilla County Board of Commissioners, said on June 23 that he had received “a typed letter full of racist, homophobic and misogynist slurs,” according to the [East Oregonian](#).



Lopez, who serves on the city of Hermiston’s Hispanic Advisory Committee, posted a photo of the letter on Facebook. His page has since been deleted, but a redacted copy of the letter was posted on the [KEPR](#) website at the time.

“Don’t waste your time trying to become anything in this county we will make sure you never win and your family suffers along with all the \*\*\*\*\* Mexicans in the area!” it warns.

“America is for the God fearing, pro gun, pro life humans who refuse to be controlled by the government,” it declares. “Theres no room for people like you here!”

The letter is signed, “Sincerely, America!”

According to KEPR, Lopez commented on the letter when he posted it on Facebook, writing: “Many don’t know me or who I am and where I stand. As an American born man who served in the USCG [U.S. Coast Guard], fire and rescue services. I’m also proud of where my parents and grandparents were born and raised, Mexico. I have lived a life full of obstacles and challenges Including racism. There is no room [f]or tolerance of that.”

Lopez went on to state that people “must address these issues that are destroying and distancing us from unification.” He added, “We must be mature and adults about things and address them properly at a table or meeting in which we can come to an agreement or mutual understanding!”

Lopez filed a police report, which led to “a criminal investigation for second-degree murder,” reported [KOMO](#).

On Monday, Hermiston Police Chief Jason Edmiston announced that the investigation had been closed after Lopez confessed that he wrote the letter himself.

“From the onset, this alleged incident has been thoroughly investigated,” Edmiston told the *East Oregonian* via e-mail. “Our investigation has shown that Mr. Lopez wrote the letter himself and made false statements to the police and on social media. The end result is a verbal and written admission by Mr. Lopez that the letter was fabricated.”

Lopez also admitted as much in an interview with the paper, though he tried to portray it as a well-meaning attempt to address racism that got out of hand:



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Lopez initially stated that it was a big misunderstanding. He said he just meant to speak with Edmiston about racism in Umatilla County and use the letter as an example of the type of racism people experience, but often don't speak out about publicly.

"I never meant to file a report, it just kind of spiraled out," he said.

He also said he "never meant to mislead" the public.

Edmiston is clearly annoyed at the fact that he wasted precious resources on Lopez's phony allegation. "This investigation is particularly frustrating as we are in the midst of multiple major investigations while battling a resource shortage due to the current pandemic," he said. "The time spent on this fictitious claim means time lost on other matters, not to mention it needlessly adds to the incredible tension that exists in our nation today. As a lifelong resident of this diverse community, I'm disgusted someone would try to carelessly advance their personal ambitions at the risk of others."

The phony letter isn't the only public lie Lopez has apparently told, but it may be the costliest one for him because it led to the investigation of others. Edmiston says his department can find no evidence that Lopez ever served in the Coast Guard, which could place him in violation of the Stolen Valor Act. In addition, Edmiston alleges that Lopez presented "other false credentials" during his run for county commissioner, noted KOMO. "This in conjunction with a lengthy criminal history record may result in the filing of additional charges."

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