

Former NFL Star Sentenced To Life

FALL RIVER, Mass. (AP) — Former New England Patriots star Aaron Hernandez was convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to life in prison Wednesday for a deadly late-night shooting, sealing the downfall of an athlete who once had a \$40 million contract and a standout career ahead of him.

Hernandez, 25, who had been considered one of the top tight ends in professional football, shook his head, pursed his lips and sat down after the jury forewoman pronounced him guilty in the slaying of Odin Lloyd, a 27-year-old landscaper and amateur weekend football player who was dating the sister of Hernandez's fiancée.

Hernandez's mother, Terri, and his fiancée, Shayanna Jenkins, cried and gasped when they heard the verdict. Hernandez, his eyes red, mouthed to them: "Be strong. Be strong." Lloyd's mother also cried.

Jurors deliberated for 36 hours over seven days before rendering their decision, which also included convictions on weapons charges.

"The jury found that he was just a man who committed a brutal murder," District Attorney Thomas Quinn said after the verdict. "The fact that he was a professional athlete meant nothing in the end."

Cop Plows Cruiser Into Robbery Suspect

TUCSON, Ariz. (AP) — Dramatic dash-cam videos of an arrest in Arizona put the public in the driver's seat as an officer plows his cruiser into a rifle-toting robbery suspect at high speed. Policing experts on Wednesday called the officer's tactics unconventional and even outrageous, but justified, given the circumstances.

The images police released Tuesday provoked intense responses among tens of thousands of people after they were posted on the Internet, providing a new angle to the national debate over policing.

Some expressed outrage, accusing the officer of improperly using deadly force. Others said he deserves a medal for managing to quickly and safely end a standoff with a dangerous gunman.

Prosecutors cleared Marana Police Officer Michael Rapijko of any wrongdoing after he swerved around another officer who had been cautiously tailing the robbery suspect, then accelerated and rammed into the man's back on Feb. 19.

The videos show Mario Valencia, 36, cart-wheeling through the air in the instant before the cruiser breaks through a retaining wall, shattering its windshield. Rapijko, 34, and other officers then jump out from all over, guns drawn, to make sure Valencia stays down.

Clinton: I Want To Fix Our Political System

NORWALK, Iowa (AP) — Hillary Rodham Clinton came to Iowa to give voters an intimate glance of who she'd be as president. What they got instead was a glimpse into the complicated relationship between the current inhabitant of the White House and the woman who hopes to follow in his path.

On a two-day swing through Iowa, the opening act of her 2016 campaign, Clinton embraced two of the most politically fraught planks of President Barack Obama's legacy: the health care law and the push for an immigration overhaul. But even as she cast herself as continuing the Obama administration's domestic policies, Clinton carefully drew a subtle contrast between her leadership and that of the president.

"I want fix our political system. I want to get things done," she told small business owners, sitting between cardboard fruit cartons at a produce company warehouse in Norwalk. "We have to start breaking down the divisions that have paralyzed our politics."

The roundtable with small business owners reflected the pull-and-tug that Clinton will face as she attempts to extend Democrats' control over the White House to three straight terms, should she win the nomination.

It won't be easy: Historically, Americans have rewarded change after a party controls the presidency for two straight terms — Republicans Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush were the only presidents to maintain control for three terms during the past half-century.

Investigators Asked Clinton About Email

NORWALK, Iowa (AP) — Hillary Rodham Clinton was asked by congressional investigators more than two years ago whether she had used a private email account while serving as secretary of state but the State Department later declined to address the question.

Rep. Darrell Issa, R-Calif., then the chairman of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, asked the State Department about it in a December 2012 letter about officials' use of personal email. The letter asked if Clinton "or any senior agency official ever used a personal email account to conduct official business."

The State Department responded in March 2013 with details on their email policies but didn't address the substance of the request. The letters were first reported by *The New York Times*.

Clinton was wrapping up a two-day trip to Iowa on Wednesday, making her first campaign stops since launching her 2016 presidential campaign on Sunday. She was meeting with small business owners at an event in Norwalk, about 15 miles outside Des Moines.

She said during a news conference at the United Nations last month that she used a personal account over a government one out of convenience. She deleted about 30,000 emails that she has described as personal in nature and has declined requests from congressional Republicans to turn over her server for an independent review.

Small Aircraft Lands On West Capitol Lawn; Pilot In Custody

BY ALAN FRAM
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Police arrested a man who steered his tiny aircraft onto the West Lawn of the U.S. Capitol after flying through restricted airspace around the National Mall Wednesday.

The pilot was Doug Hughes, 61, a Postal Service worker from Ruskin, Florida, Capitol Police said in a statement Wednesday evening. On his website, Hughes took responsibility for the stunt and said he was delivering letters to all 535 members of Congress to draw attention to campaign finance corruption.

"As I have informed the authorities, I have no violent inclinations or intent," Hughes wrote on his website, the-democracyclub.org. "An ultralight aircraft poses no major physical threat — it may present a political threat to graft. I hope so. There's no need to worry — I'm just delivering the mail."

A Senate aide said Capitol Police knew of the plan shortly before Hughes took off, and said he had previously been interviewed by the U.S. Secret Service. The aide spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss details of the investigation.

Secret Service spokesman Brian Leary said the agency interviewed Hughes in Florida in October 2013 after obtaining "information from a concerned citizen about an individual purporting their desire to land a single-manned aircraft on the grounds of the United States Capitol or the White House." Leary said the information was shared with Capitol Police and "a complete and thorough investigation was conducted."

Capitol Police identified the open-air aircraft, which sported the U.S. Postal Service logo and landed about half a city block from the Capitol building, as a "gyrocopter with a single occupant." About two hours after the device had landed, police announced that a bomb squad had cleared it and nothing hazardous had been found. The authorities then moved it off the Capitol lawn to a secure location.

Hughes flew to Washington from the vicinity of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, which took about an hour, said Ben



JAMES BORCHUCK/TAMPA BAY TIMES/ZUMA PRESS/TNS

A bomb squad technician walks past the gyrocopter that Doug Hughes landed on the grass in front of the United States Capitol on Wednesday.

Montgomery, a reporter with the Tampa Bay Times. Montgomery said Hughes discussed his plan in advance with the newspaper, had meticulously plotted his flight and considered himself on a mission that was "sort of a mix of P.T. Barnum and Paul Revere."

House Homeland Security panel Chairman Michael McCaul, R-Texas, said the pilot landed on his own, but authorities were prepared to shoot him down if he had made it much closer to the Capitol. "Had it gotten any closer to the speaker's balcony they have long guns to take it down, but it didn't. It landed right in front," McCaul said.

The Federal Aviation Administration said the pilot had not been in contact with air traffic controllers and the FAA didn't authorize him to enter restricted airspace.

Airspace security rules that cover the Capitol and the District of Columbia prohibit private aircraft flights without prior coordination and permission. Violators can face civil and criminal penalties.

The White House said President Barack Obama had been briefed on the situation.

Witnesses said the craft approached the Capitol from the west, flying low

over the National Mall and the Capitol reflecting pool across the street from the building. It barely cleared a row of trees and a statue of Gen. Ulysses Grant.

John Jewell, 72, a tourist from Statesville, North Carolina, said the craft landed hard and bounced. An officer was already there with a gun drawn. "He didn't get out until police officers told him to get out. He had his hands up" and was quickly led away by the police, Jewell said. "They snatched him pretty fast."

Elizabeth Bevins, a tourist from Atlanta, said she was standing across the street from the Capitol when the little gyrocopter flew in around 20 or 30 feet high, and it "just sort of plopped down on the lawn."

Police with rifles yelled at the pilot not to move and told bystanders to run with their heads down, said Nora Neus, 21, a junior at the University of Virginia who was in town for a job interview. "I thought it was a joke at first. My next thought was this is something really bad," she said.

Amid the initial commotion, the small craft presented a strange sight sitting on the green lawn of the Capitol, its rotors slowly spinning.

Feared Drowning Of 400 Migrants In Shipwreck Raises Alarms In Europe

BY COLLEEN BARRY
Associated Press

MILAN — The feared drowning of 400 migrants in a shipwreck this week in the Mediterranean Sea — one of the deadliest such tragedies in the last decade — raised alarms Wednesday amid an unprecedented wave of migration toward Europe from Africa and the Middle East.

The U.N. refugee agency expressed shock at the scale of the deaths in Monday's capsizing and renewed calls on European governments to redouble search and rescue efforts, while the International Organization for Migration maintained that the situation had reached "crisis proportions."

The Mediterranean "has emerged as the most dangerous" of four major sea routes used by the world's refugees and migrants, taken by 219,000 people last year, U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees Antonio Guterres said.

The Italian Coast Guard rescued some 140 people

off the coast of Libya on Monday and recovered nine bodies, but could see immediately from the size of the capsized smuggler's boat that there had likely been hundreds more on board.

The rescue was made during a five-day surge that saw Italian ships save nearly 10,000 people at sea since Friday — an unprecedented rate in such a short period, according to Cmdr. Filippo Marini, a Coast Guard spokesman. The number is only likely to grow, with summer weather encouraging even more people fleeing poverty and conflict to make the perilous crossing.

Survivors of Monday's shipwreck reported that as many as 550 people were on board, according to aid workers.

"Of course this is an estimate. No one who travels knows exactly the number. They don't get a ticket that says: No. 550," said Barbara Molinaro, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees spokeswoman in Italy.

Accounts by survivors,

mostly sub-Saharan Africans, indicate the ship capsized when men on the upper deck rushed to wave down a ship they believed to be a rescue vessel, said IOM spokesman Joel Millman in Geneva.

"Many were waving and gesticulating to get attention and that caused the vessel to capsize, with the speculation that women and children who were below deck were drowned instantly," Millman said.

The rescued migrants arrived Wednesday at the southern Italian port of Corigliano, where aid workers dressed in white protective jumpsuits, gloves and masks worked to process them.

A precise accounting of the number of dead will never be known: The search operation was called off after the recovery of just nine bodies due to the depth of the sea, meaning there will be no body count to verify survivors' accounts, as is nearly always the case.

"For all of these things, we rely on the consistency of the reports we get,

but we know these people have been traumatized and through terrible things," Millman said.

The UNHCR estimates 3,500 migrants died in the Mediterranean last year, up from 600 in 2013. With few bodies recovered, many deaths are never officially confirmed. Instead, their fates are recounted by survivors and, in cases when boats are lost at sea without any rescue attempt, by relatives who report their failure to arrive in Europe.

So far this year, the number of dead or missing at sea is 900, according to the UNHCR, compared with just 17 over the same time last year. Typically, the arrival of migrants making the perilous journey goes up in April as the weather improves, increasing concerns about the coming months.

Overall, since 2000, the IOM estimates that over 22,000 migrants have lost their lives trying to reach Europe, although there are no precise figures.



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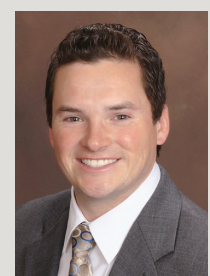


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