

U.S. Attorney: 13 Indicted In Drug Case

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — A federal indictment filed Friday accuses 13 people, including an auto dealership owner, of conspiring with a Mexican drug cartel to deal methamphetamine in Omaha, according to the U.S. Attorney for Nebraska.

Twelve of those indicted have been arrested or already were behind bars on other offenses, and police are looking for the 13th person, U.S. Attorney Deborah Gilg said. She said six of those indicted are in the U.S. illegally.

The indictments were announced the same day officers from seven different law enforcement agencies in eastern Nebraska, as well as the Council Bluffs, Iowa, Police Department, executed search warrants in the case.

One of the searches took place at Gomez Auto Sales, run by Heriberto Gomez, who was arrested. Court documents did not list an attorney for Gomez.

Gilg said authorities seized 30 cars from his lot, which authorities allege was a front for the drug ring.

Authorities also have seized more than \$110,000 in cash and 26 pounds of meth, believed to have a street value of more than \$1 million, Gilg said.

"This all kind of started with two traffic stops that occurred ... July 16," Gilg said. "One was on the Kansas-Nebraska border and involved a person transporting 10 pounds of meth headed for Omaha. Then a couple of hours later, there was a second traffic stop in Omaha that involved 16 pounds of meth, and these individuals were connected with each other."

If convicted, those indicted face up to life in prison.

S.D. Man Convicted Of Raping 6-Year-Old

SIoux FALLS (AP) — A South Dakota man has been convicted of raping a 6-year-old child.

A jury found 57-year-old Kevin Buchholtz guilty of first-degree rape, sexual contact with a child and indecent exposure for molesting the girl inside his Valley Springs mobile home.

KELO-TV reports that the jury deliberated for three hours before convicting Buchholtz. He could be sentenced to up to life in prison.

Defense attorneys argued that that Buchholtz was innocent and law enforcement officials were on a witch hunt.

But prosecutors say there was no reason the 6-year-old would make up a story about Buchholtz assaulting her.

Neb. Man Gets 8 Years For Sex Abuse Of Minor

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — A Nebraska man has received an 8-year prison term for sexually abusing a minor on the Omaha Indian Reservation.

Federal prosecutors announced Friday that 71-year-old Isaac L. Sherman of Macy was sentenced in U.S. District Court in Omaha. After he leaves prison, he will remain on supervised release for the rest of his life.

Prosecutors say his accuser, a 12-year-old girl, told a school counselor in May 2011 that Sherman had abused her. The girl told child advocates that the abuse occurred two years earlier, at Sherman's home in Macy.

The FBI interviewed Sherman in August 2011, at which point he admitted to the abuse.

Prosecutors say Sherman and the child are both members of the Omaha Tribe of Nebraska.

Rapid City Mayor Vetoes Tax Increase

RAPID CITY (AP) — Rapid City Mayor Sam Kooiker (KWAY'-kur) has vetoed the city council's decision to raise city property taxes next year.

The city council voted 6-4 earlier in the week to increase property taxes by the rate of inflation, an adjustment done to offset rising costs.

KOTA-TV reports that Kooiker says the property tax is not needed. The mayor says city sales tax collections are rising more than had been expected and eight tax increment financing districts are expiring.

The inflationary increase in the property tax would bring in an extra \$402,000 in revenue to the city.

Eric Robert To Be Executed In Mid-October

PIERRE (AP) — South Dakota Attorney General Marty Jackley says Judge Bradley Zell has approved his request to schedule a mid-October execution for a State Penitentiary inmate who killed a prison guard.

Fifty-year-old Eric Robert is to be put to death by lethal injection the week of Oct. 14. The exact date and time will be chosen by the prison warden.

Robert pleaded guilty to killing guard Ron Johnson during a failed escape attempt last year and asked to be put to death. The Supreme Court last week unanimously upheld his death sentence.

A second inmate involved in the escape attempt also has pleaded guilty and been sentenced to death, but is appealing. A third inmate was given life in prison.

Deadwood Table Game Revenue Soars In July

DEADWOOD (AP) — Gambling revenues were up in Deadwood during the first month of an increased betting limit.

A state law took effect July 1 increasing table betting limits from \$100 to \$1,000. *The Rapid City Journal* reports that table game revenue for the month was up 20 percent over the year.

Deadwood Gaming Association President Tom Nelson says the increase is directly related to the increased betting limit. Deadwood Mountain Grand General Manager Brad Hemmah tells KOTA-TV that the higher limit has been well-received by customers.

Hinder Concert At Corn Palace Canceled

MITCHELL (AP) — The rock group Hinder canceled a concert at the Corn Palace in Mitchell just minutes before the band was scheduled to take the stage.

An official with the company that booked acts for the annual Corn Palace Festival tells *The Daily Republic* newspaper that singer Austin Winkler couldn't sing because of strained vocal cords.

About 750 fans had turned out for the Thursday night show. The rest of the band came out on stage, explained the situation and apologized. Hinder's Facebook page also includes a message thanking the fans for being understanding and promising to return to the city for another concert.

Fans can get refunds on their tickets.

Police Probe Fatal Shooting Of Omaha Man

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Police say a 63-year-old man has died after being shot in southeast Omaha.

An Omaha Police Department news release says Gilbert Hernandez-Vazquez died at Creighton University Medical Center. He'd been taken there Thursday night.

Police say officers sent to investigate a call about a shooting found Hernandez-Vazquez, wounded, on a street a little after 8:20 p.m.

No arrests have been reported.

1 Charge Dismissed In Witness Tampering Case

ABERDEEN (AP) — A judge has dismissed one charge filed against a former South Dakota county prosecutor and a court advocate for juveniles and families, but they still face other charges including witness tampering.

The American News reports that Judge Gene Kean said prosecutors did not provide enough information to charge former Brown County Deputy State's Attorney Brandon Taliaferro and advocate Shirley Schwab with subornation of perjury, or getting another person to lie under oath. Prosecutors have the option of refiling the charge.

Taliaferro and Schwab are accused in a case in which prosecutors say an abuse victim was influenced to give false testimony. The witness tampering charges are the most serious, carrying possible 10-year prison terms.

Taliaferro and Schwab have pleaded not guilty. They face a late October trial.

Neb. Senate Hopefuls Set To Debate

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Expect U.S. Senate hopefuls Deb Fischer and Bob Kerrey to emphasize their experience and Nebraska roots Saturday during their first face-to-face debate.

The showdown between Fischer, a Republican, and Kerrey, a former Democratic governor who once represented Nebraska in the Senate, is the first of at least three promised debates, but the only one scheduled so far.

Kerrey is attempting a comeback after moving to New York when his second Senate term ended in 2001. Fischer is pitching herself as a Washington outsider and seasoned state lawmaker from a ranching family. They are running for the seat now held by Ben Nelson, a Democrat who is not seeking re-election in November.

The debate is scheduled for 4 p.m. Saturday at the Nebraska State Fair in Grand Island. It's sponsored by *The Omaha World-Herald*, *The Grand Island Independent* and RFD-TV.

Paul Landow, a political science professor at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, said Kerrey will likely play up his experience at the national level, while Fischer will probably emphasize her work in the Legislature.

"This is Nebraska, so it'll be cordial compared to how it might be in New Jersey or California," Landow said. "That said, I expect it to get pretty rough. There's a lot at stake."

Kerrey has pushed for more debates. Last month, he challenged Fischer to debate him on health care, saying voters deserve more opportunities to hear the candidates' views prior to the election.

"Senator Kerrey's debating skills are well-known," said Landow, a former Democratic consultant. "He'll likely be hoping to contrast his national experience against what he would argue is Sen. Fischer's inexperience. Sen. Fischer will probably try to do the opposite. She'll be trying to demonstrate that she can hold her own or even exceed Sen. Kerrey in terms of knowledge and experience."

Kerrey has criticized Fischer for declining an invitation to a candidate forum in October at Creighton University, and called for at least seven debates before November. But Fischer's campaign stalled, noting Kerrey engaged in a total of three debates in his 1988 and 1994 campaigns for U.S. Senate.

Kerrey dismissed the comparison, noting that he backed out of primary election debates in 1988 when a third party candidate was invited to participate and that his two debates as an incumbent senator with a Republican challenger in 1994 was enough at the time.

While Fischer leads in polls, Kerrey hopes to cut into her advantage in heavily Republican rural areas by suggesting that her proposed federal cuts would hurt farmers, ranchers and the small towns that dominate much of the state outside Omaha and Lincoln.

Murder Convict Won't Testify Against Girlfriend

ALEXANDRIA (AP) — A man serving life in prison for murdering a South Dakota teenager three years ago is refusing to testify against his girlfriend during her upcoming murder trial.

Alexander Salgado has promised to cause problems if forced to go to court, State Penitentiary Officer Mark Schlosser said in court Thursday, the *Argus Leader* newspaper reported. Salgado, 22, has been involved in violent incidents in prison and is being held in disciplinary segregation, the officer said.

"Based on previous experience with him, as soon as he's given the ultimatum, it ends badly," Schlosser said. "He specifically told me that if he went today, there would be is-

sues."

Prosecutors instead want a judge to allow a videotape of Salgado's confession to be shown during the trial next month of Maricela Diaz. The 17-year-old is being tried in adult court in the November 2009 kidnapping and death of 16-year-old Jasmine Guevara, who authorities said was lured to a rural area, stabbed and left in the trunk of a burning vehicle. Salgado told police that Diaz wanted to kill Guevara because Diaz was jealous of the teen's flirtations with him.

Prosecutors also want the jury in Diaz's trial to be read the transcript of Salgado's testimony at a hearing that led to Diaz's case being moved to adult court.

"Mr. Salgado put us in this po-

sition," Deputy Attorney General Brent Kempema said. "Ideally, we'd want to have him on the stand so we could show the jurors what kind of person this is."

Defense lawyer Doug Dailey said letting Salgado testify via videotape would unfairly prejudice the jury against his client. Salgado was combative during his 2011 testimony, and playing a tape of him behaving in a cooperative manner would lend his testimony credibility it doesn't deserve, Dailey said.

"I believe that the witness needs to be brought before the court so the jury has the opportunity to determine his demeanor and to determine if he has any credibility," Dailey said.

Salgado is the father of Diaz's

child. Diaz's lawyers have asked Judge Tim Bjorkman to allow them to refer to their client as a victim of sexual abuse whose abuser is an unreliable witness who overstated her involvement to avoid a potential death sentence. Salgado pleaded guilty to second-degree murder and was sentenced to life in prison without parole.

Diaz could face life in prison if convicted. She could not face the death penalty because of her age. Jury selection is scheduled to begin Sept. 10 in Sioux Falls.

Both Salgado and Diaz are Mexican nationals who are in the U.S. illegally.

Matchstick Model Of Capitol Took 2 Years

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — It took 86-year-old Ralph "Dick" Caves a couple of years of an hour here, an hour there to complete his matchstick model of the Nebraska Capitol.

Caves told the *Lincoln Journal Star* that he got the inspiration and the 2-inch-long, headless matchsticks from Patrick Acton's Matchstick Marvels museum in Gladbrook, Iowa. Acton's stick models of the U.S. Capitol, machines and battleships are displayed there.

Caves had several false starts on his model, saying, "I'd hate to tell you how many times I took it apart and started over."

He used blueprints of floor plans he got from the College of Architecture at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, aerial photos that his grandson found for him and other photos from the Internet. Caves also used pictures he took of the Capitol as he walked around outside.

The Capitol is 400 feet tall. Caves' matchstick model is 29 inches tall. The entrances on the four sides mirror the different entrances on the Capitol. His model has rounded turrets, cathedral windows and a sower on top, just like the real thing.

"By no means is it perfect," though, he said.

He's comfortable with the sticks, having made seven or eight matchstick ship models that he's given for former Navy shipmates. Caves is a World War II veteran who served as a radio operator for two years aboard a landing ship in the South Pacific.

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