

## Ohio

## Man Who Kidnapped 3 Women Gets Life

BY THOMAS J. SHEERAN AND JOHN SEEWER  
Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Standing before the man who kidnapped her and raped her for a decade, Michelle Knight described how the world had changed in the three months since they last saw each other. The captive, she said, was now free and the oppressor would be locked away forever to “die a little every day.”

Ariel Castro’s fate had been determined long before he was sentenced Thursday to life in prison plus 1,000 years. But Knight’s words in a crowded courtroom put a final seal on the kidnapping case that horrified the nation and subjected three young women to years of torment in Castro’s ramshackle house.

“You took 11 years of my life away and I have got it back,” Knight said. “I spent 11 years in hell. Now your hell is just beginning.”

A short time later, the 53-year-old former

school bus driver apologized to his victims briefly in a rambling, defiant statement. He repeatedly blamed his sex addiction, his former wife and others while claiming most of the sex was consensual and that the women were never tortured.

“These people are trying to paint me as a monster,” he said. “I’m not a monster. I’m sick.”

The sentence was a foregone conclusion after Castro pleaded guilty last week to 937 counts, including aggravated murder, kidnapping, rape and assault. A deal struck with prosecutors spared him from a possible death sentence for beating and starving Knight until she miscarried.

During her statement, Knight was just a few feet from Castro, seeing him for the first time since her rescue in May from the house that Castro turned into a prison with a makeshift alarm system and heavy wooden doors covering the windows.

“I will live on,” she said. “You will die a little every day.”

The three women disappeared separately between 2002 and 2004, when they were 14, 16 and 20 years old. Each had accepted a ride from Castro. They escaped May 6 when Amanda Berry, now 27, broke part of a door to Castro’s house in a tough Cleveland neighborhood and yelled for help. Castro was arrested that evening.

The escape electrified Cleveland, where photos of the missing women still hung on utility posts. Elation turned to despair as details of their ordeal emerged.

Prosecutors on Thursday detailed Castro’s repeated sexual assaults, how he chained the women and denied them food or fresh air.

They displayed photos that gave a first glimpse inside the rooms where the women lived. Stuffed animals lined the bed and crayon drawings were taped to the wall where Berry lived with her young daughter who was fathered by Castro. One of the drawings on a shelf said “Happy Birthday.”

But in the same room, the window was boarded shut and door knobs had been removed and replaced with multiple locks.

Another room shared by Knight and Gina DeJesus had a portable toilet and a clock radio and several chains.

Prosecutors said the women were chained to a pole in the basement and a bedroom heater. One woman had a motorcycle helmet placed on her head while in the basement. Later, when she tried to escape, she had a vacuum cleaner cord wrapped around her neck.

FBI agent Andrew Burke said Castro would occasionally pay his victims after raping them. Then he would require them to pay him if they wanted something special from the store.

A letter written by Castro was found in the home days after his arrest and shown in court. It was titled “Confession and Details.” He also wrote “I am a sexual predator.”

## Stock Market Roars To Record Highs

NEW YORK (AP) — Stocks roared back to record highs on Thursday, driven by good news on the economy.

The Standard & Poor’s 500, the Dow Jones industrial average and the Russell 2000 index set all-time highs. The S&P broke through 1,700 points for the first time. The Nasdaq hit its highest level since September 2000.

The gains were driven by a steady flow of encouraging reports on the global economy.

Overnight, a positive read on China’s manufacturing helped shore up Asian markets.

An hour before U.S. trading started, the government reported that the number of people applying for unemployment benefits last week fell sharply.

At mid-morning, a trade group said U.S. factories revved up production last month.

And while corporate earnings news after the market closed Wednesday and throughout Thursday brought both winners and losers, investors were able to find enough reports that they liked, including those from CBS, MetLife and Yelp.

“It’s just a lot of things adding up,” said Russell Croft, portfolio manager of the Croft Value Fund in Baltimore. “It’s hard to put your finger on why exactly, but basically it’s a bunch of pretty good data points coming together to make a very good day.”

## Congress Leaves Business Unfinished

WASHINGTON (AP) — Leaving piles of unfinished business for the fall, Congress began exiting Washington Thursday for a five-week vacation with its accomplishments few, its efforts at budgeting in tatters and its collective nerves frayed by months of feuding.

The House’s chief accomplishment for the week was a bipartisan Wednesday vote to deal with spiking student loan interest rates, readying that legislation for President Barack Obama’s signature.

But that bit of progress came the very day that a Republican strategy of embracing painful automatic budget cuts imploded with the collapse of a major transportation and housing bill.

That measure fell victim, top lawmakers said, to opposition from both conservative and more moderate Republicans and laid bare the flaws in the party’s budget strategy, which promised deeper cuts to domestic programs than the rank and file were willing to deliver in votes on funding bills implementing the pledge.

Before leaving town, the GOP House prepared its 40th attack on Obama’s signature health care law on Friday and slated votes on other legislation aimed at embarrassing the administration and sharpening the party’s political message for encounters back home with constituents.

Also on Friday, GOP leaders looked forward to an easier time with two other votes, one to block the Internal Revenue Service from enforcing “Obamacare’s” penalties on people who don’t buy health insurance and another on the “Stop Government Abuse Act,” which among its provisions would allow people to tape record conversations they have with IRS agents and other federal workers.

## Morsi Supporters Snub Protection Offer

CAIRO (AP) — The military-backed government offered protection Thursday to supporters of deposed President Mohammed Morsi who end their two sit-ins — widely seen as a first step toward dispersing the vigils on opposite sides of Cairo.

But the protesters responded defiantly: “Over our dead bodies!”

The standoff underscored the ongoing political crisis since the armed forces toppled Egypt’s first democratically elected leader on July 3: thousands in the streets demanding Morsi’s reinstatement, a government unable to exert its authority, and recurrent violence that has killed more than 260 people.

Rights groups, activists and politicians from rival camps, fearful of more bloodshed, tried to ward off any use of force, including a suggestion of putting a human chain around the protest sites.

International pressure grew for the interim government to release Morsi and create a process that includes his Muslim Brotherhood, Egypt’s largest political faction, which refuses to deal with the new authorities.

## Postal Service Eyes Alcohol Deliveries

WASHINGTON (AP) — Special delivery from the post office — beer, wine and spirits, if Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe has his way.

In an interview with The Associated Press, Donahoe said Thursday delivery of alcoholic beverages is on his wish list as the agency considers ways to raise revenue and save money after losing \$16 billion last year. He also said he endorses ending most door-to-door and Saturday mail deliveries as a way to help stabilize the service’s finances.

Donahoe said delivering alcohol has the potential to raise as much as \$50 million a year. He mentioned how customers might want to, for example, mail bottles of wine home when they tour vineyards. Donahoe said his agency has looked at the possibility of using special boxes that would hold two, four or six bottles and ship for a flat-rate anywhere in the country.

“There’s a lot of money to be made in shipping beer, wine and spirits,” Donahoe said. “We’d like to be in that business.”

The Postal Service says mailing alcoholic beverages is currently restricted by law. Customers are even told to cover any logos or labels if they use alcoholic beverage boxes for shipments.



BRIAN MARK PETERSON/MINNEAPOLIS STAR TRIBUNE/MCT  
Cathy ten Broeke, left, surprises Margaret Miles with a wedding ring as a crowd of family and friends watch at the Hotel Minneapolis on Wednesday in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The couple was the first same-sex couple to be married by Mayor R.T. Rybak at midnight Thursday in Minneapolis. It was the first day that all Minnesota couples enjoyed the freedom to marry.

## Gay Couples Get Hitched In Minnesota, Rhode Island

BY DAVID KLEPPER AND PATRICK CONDON  
Associated Press

PROVIDENCE, R.I. — In public celebrations and intimate ceremonies, gay couples exchanged vows Thursday in Minnesota and Rhode Island as the number of places where same-sex couples can wed grew to more than a quarter of U.S. states.

Dozens of gay couples began getting hitched at the stroke of midnight in Minnesota, the largest Midwestern state where it is now legal to do so. In Rhode Island, the last New England state to allow same-sex marriage, weddings began at 8:30 a.m., when municipal offices opened.

Zachary Marcus and Gary McDowell were married Thursday afternoon at Providence City Hall by Mayor Angel Taveras. McDowell, 28, a Harvard Medical School researcher, was born in Northern Ireland. The recent Supreme Court decision striking down a law denying federal benefits to married gay couples means he can petition for permanent residency.

“It was important for us that it be the first day,” said Marcus, 25, a Brown University medical student. “It’s a personal day for us, and it’s also a great political victory.”

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ZACHARY MARCUS

As of Thursday, same-sex couples can marry in 13 states and in Washington, D.C. The national gay rights group Freedom to Marry estimates that 30 percent of the U.S. population now lives in places where gay marriage is legal.

In Minneapolis, an estimated 1,000 people packed into City Hall at midnight to celebrate 46 same-sex weddings officiated by Mayor R.T. Rybak. Several Hennepin County judges performed 21 more in the City Council’s chambers.

“I didn’t expect to cry quite that hard,” said a beaming Cathy ten Broeke, who with Margaret Miles was the first gay couple to wed at City Hall.

“We do,” the couple and their 5-year-old son, Louie, said to cheers as they promised to be a family.

Gov. Mark Dayton had proclaimed Aug. 1 to be “Freedom to Marry Day” in

Minnesota. Celebrations in Rhode Island were more muted, which advocates said was probably because so many nearby states already allow same-sex marriage.

Democratic Gov. Lincoln Chafee, who became one of the earliest prominent national supporters of legalizing gay marriage when he was a Republican U.S. senator, planned to attend a state lawmaker’s wedding later in the day. House Speaker Gordon Fox, who is gay, planned to officiate. U.S. Rep. David Cicilline, one of the few openly gay members of Congress, stayed in Washington for the legislative session but issued a statement expressing support.

A Washington, D.C.-based group opposed to gay marriage, Alliance Defending Freedom, advised municipal clerks they could ask a colleague to issue licenses to same-sex couples if they were opposed. There were no reports of that happening in either state.

In some communities, excited clerks posed for photos with couples. Newport, R.I., City Clerk Kathleen Silvia gave kisses to Federico Santi and John Gacher, who have been together for 41 years and converted their civil union to a marriage Thursday morning. She called it “a day of smooching.”

## Snowden Walks Free In Russia To U.S. Anger

BY JIM HEINTZ  
Associated Press

MOSCOW — Defying the United States, Russia granted Edward Snowden temporary asylum on Thursday, allowing the National Security Agency leaker to slip out of the Moscow airport where he has been holed up for weeks in hopes of evading espionage charges back home.

The 30-year-old former NSA contractor now has plenty of room to roam throughout the sprawling country and continue the bizarre journey that has already stretched across half the planet — from Hawaii to Hong Kong to the Russian capital.

The move infuriated the U.S. administration, which said it was “extremely disappointed” and warned that the decision could derail an upcoming summit between President Barack Obama and

Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The asylum offer places a significant new strain on already-corroded relations with Washington amid differences over Syria, U.S. criticism of Russia’s human rights record and other disputes. But Russia appears to have reckoned that ending Snowden’s airport limbo was worth intensifying the political standoff. The decision gives Russia cover to depict itself as a defender of human rights, pointing a finger to deflect criticism of its own poor record and tough crackdown on dissent.

Snowden himself made that argument. In a statement issued by WikiLeaks, which has been assisting him, Snowden was quoted as saying that “over the past eight weeks we have seen the Obama administration show no respect for international or domestic law, but in the end the law is winning.”

“I thank the Russian Federation for granting me asylum in accordance with its laws and international obligations,” he said.

Snowden’s attorney, Anatoly Kucherena, was shown on Russian television holding a passport-like document issued to Snowden by Russia’s Federal Migration Service and valid for one year.

He refused to disclose the former NSA contractor’s whereabouts, telling reporters at the airport: “He now is one of the most sought-after men in the world. The issue of security is very important for him.”

In its statement, WikiLeaks said only that Snowden was headed to a “secure, confidential place” after departing Sheremetyevo Airport in a taxi accompanied by the group’s legal adviser, Sarah Harrison. It said Harrison had been with him throughout his 39 days in the airport transit zone.

Despite the phalanx of pho-

tographers and reporters camped out at the airport, no one apparently saw the former NSA contractor leaving, except for someone who snapped a photo of Kucherena talking to blurry figures whom the attorney later said were Snowden and Harrison.

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