

Amputee Olympic Star Pistorius Charged In Slaying

BY JON GAMBRELL
AND GERALD IMRAY

Associated Press

PRETORIA, South Africa — Oscar Pistorius, the double-amputee sprinter dubbed the Blade Runner, was charged Thursday in the Valentine's Day slaying of his girlfriend at his upscale home in South Africa, a shocking twist to one of the feel-good stories of last summer's Olympics.

Pistorius buried his face in the hood of his workout jacket as officers escorted him from a police station after his arrest in the shooting death of Reeva Steenkamp, a 30-year-old model who had spoken out on Twitter against rape and abuse of women.

Police said she was shot four times in the pre-dawn hours at Pistorius' villa in a gated community in the capital, Pretoria. Officers found a 9 mm pistol inside the home and arrested Pistorius on a murder charge.

What sparked the shooting remained unclear, but police said they had received calls in the past about domestic altercations at the home of the 26-year-old athlete, who has spoken publicly about his love of firearms.

A police spokeswoman, Brigadier Denise Beukes, said the incidents included "allegations of a domestic nature."

"I'm not going to elaborate on it, but there have been incidents," Beukes said. She said Pistorius was home at the time of Steenkamp's death and "there is no other suspect involved."

Pistorius made history in the London Games when he became the first double-amputee track

athlete to compete in the Olympics. He didn't win a medal but did make the semifinals of the 400 meters and became an international star.

Thursday, companies quickly removed billboards and advertising featuring Pistorius, a national hero in South Africa who also inspired fans worldwide with the image of his high-tech carbon-fiber blades whipping through the air.

Kenny Oldwage, Pistorius' lawyer, told reporters the athlete was "emotional" after his arrest, "but he is keeping up." He said he planned to seek bail for Pistorius at a preliminary hearing Friday.

Pistorius has had troubles in the past in his personal life, which often featured fast cars, cage fighters and women.

In February 2009, he crashed a speedboat on South Africa's Vaal River, breaking his nose, jaw and several ribs and damaging an eye socket. He required 180 stitches to his face. Witnesses said he had been drinking, and officers found alcoholic beverages in the wreckage, though they did not do blood tests.

In November, Pistorius was involved in an altercation over a woman with a local coal mining millionaire, South African media reported. The two men involved the South African Police Service's elite Hawks investigative unit before settling the matter.

Pistorius' father, Henke Pistorius, said Thursday: "We all pray for guidance and strength for Oscar and the lady's parents."

A spokeswoman for Pistorius at Fast Track, an international sports marketing agency in Lon-



BRIAN PETERSON/MINNEAPOLIS STAR TRIBUNE/MCT
Oscar Pistorius, a double leg amputee Olympic runner from South Africa, warms up at the Olympic stadium, August 3, 2012, in London. On Thursday, South African police arrested Pistorius and said he would be charged with murder after his girlfriend, Reeva Steenkamp, was shot and killed at his home earlier in the morning.

don, said the athlete was assisting with the investigation and there would be no further comment "until matters become clearer."

The sprinter's former coach, Andrea Giannini, said he hoped the shooting was "just a tragic accident."

"No matter how bad the situation was, Oscar always stayed calm and positive," Giannini told The Associated Press in Italy. "Whenever he was tired or nervous, he was still extremely nice to people. I never saw him violent."

Crippled Cruise Ship Slowly Makes Its Way To Land

BY JAY REEVES
AND RAMIT PLUSHNICK-MASTI

Associated Press

MOBILE, Ala. — This is not at all how it looked in the brochure: Pulled by a tugboat at a maddeningly slow pace, the cruise ship Carnival Triumph finally drew within sight of land Thursday as miserable passengers told stories of overflowing toilets, food shortages, foul odors and dangerously dark passageways.

Around midday, four days after the 893-foot ship was crippled by an engine-room fire in the middle of the Gulf of Mexico, the more than 4,200 passengers and crew members suffered another misfortune with towline issues that brought the vessel to a dead stop just when it was getting close to port.

The towline was replaced, and the crawl to Mobile resumed. The ship was expected to arrive around midnight Thursday. Officials said it would take passengers up to five hours to get off the ship, and then most faced hourslong bus rides or other travel hassles to get back home.

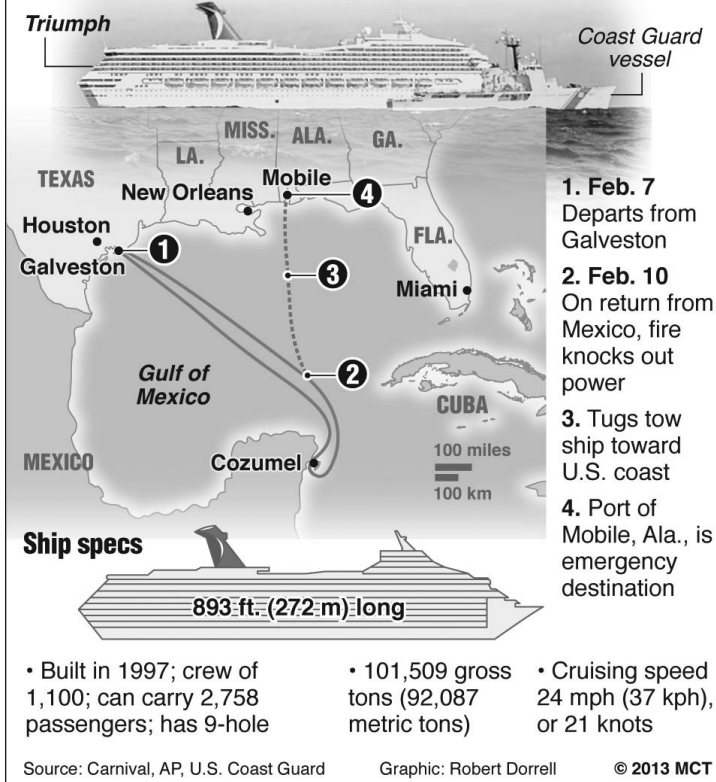
Frustrations with the cruise line simmered on and off the ship, as passengers and their relatives questioned why it had taken so long to get back to dry land. The ship left Galveston, Texas, a week ago.

Television images from CNN showed passengers with signs of "Help" and "I love you" hanging from their cabin rooms.

As the vessel drew within cellphone range, passengers vented

Ill-fated cruise

Carnival's cruise ship Triumph left Galveston, Texas, on Feb. 7, on what was to be a four-day trip to Mexico. An engine room fire left the ship without primary power. A look at the ship's misadventure:



their anger.

Renee Shanar, of Houston, was on board with her husband, who she said has heart trouble. They were told they will be among the first to

disembark, she said.

"I don't believe them, they've been lying to us from the beginning," Shanar said.

Disgusted by the foul air and heat

on the lower decks, many passengers hauled mattresses and bed sheets onto the top deck and slept there, even staying put in a soaking rain. As the ship approached the coast, a slew of Carnival workers removed the bedding and took it downstairs.

"Today they cleaned the ship, they're serving better food, covering up basically, but at least they're making it more bearable," said Kalin Hill, of Houston, who boarded the Triumph as part of a bachelorette party.

In a text message, though, she described deplorable conditions over the past few days.

"The lower floors had it the worst, the floors 'squish' when you walk and lots of the lower rooms have flooding from above floors," Hill wrote. "Half the bachelorette party was on two; the smell down there literally chokes you and hurts your eyes."

Shanar said passengers initially were given only cold cuts, such as turkey and vegetable sandwiches. Then another cruise line dropped off hamburgers and chicken sandwiches, but the line for that fare was nearly four hours long, she said.

"There's poop and urine all along the floor," she said. "The floor is flooded with sewer water ... and we had to poop in bags."

The 14-story ship still must negotiate a tricky, shallow shipping channel, and was expected to be the largest cruise liner to ever dock in Mobile. The channel narrows to 400 feet inside Mobile Bay, and the ship was only 115 feet wide. It was traveling about 5 mph.

Al-Qaida's Manifesto Left Behind In House

TIMBUKTU, Mali (AP) — In their hurry to flee last month, al-Qaida fighters left behind a crucial document: Tucked under a pile of papers and trash is a confidential letter, spelling out the terror network's strategy for conquering northern Mali and reflecting internal discord over how to rule the region.

The document is an unprecedented window into the terrorist operation, indicating that al-Qaida predicted the military intervention that would dislodge it in January and recognized its own vulnerability.

The letter also shows a sharp division within al-Qaida's Africa chapter over how quickly and how strictly to apply Islamic law, with its senior commander expressing dismay over the whipping of women and the destruction of Timbuktu's ancient monuments. It moreover leaves no doubt that despite a temporary withdrawal into the desert, al-Qaida plans to operate in the region over the long haul, and is willing to make short-term concessions on ideology to gain the allies it acknowledges it needs.

The more than nine-page document, found by The Associated Press in a building occupied by the Islamic extremists for almost a year, is signed by Abu Musab Abdul Wadud, the nom de guerre of Abdelmalek Droukdel, the senior commander appointed by Osama bin Laden to run al-Qaida's branch in Africa. The clear-headed, point-by-point assessment resembles a memo from a CEO to his top managers and lays out for his jihadists in Mali what they have done wrong in months past, and what they need to do to correct their behavior in the future.

Droukdel, the emir of al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, perhaps surprisingly argues that his fighters moved too fast and too brutally in applying the Islamic law known as Shariah to northern Mali. Comparing the relationship of al-Qaida to Mali as that of an adult to an infant, he urges them to be more gentle, like a parent:

American Airlines, US Airways To Merge

DALLAS (AP) — US Airways CEO Doug Parker has landed the big merger he sought for years. Now the soon-to-be CEO of the new American Airlines has to make it work.

Planes need painting. Frequent flier programs have to be combined. And the new airline will still be weak in Asia and need to win back business travelers who have been drifting away to other airlines.

The two airlines announced an \$11 billion merger Thursday that will turn American into the world's biggest airline, with some 6,700 daily flights and annual revenue of roughly \$40 billion. It's a coup for Parker, who runs the much-smaller US Airways and has long pursued a deal like this one with the strong belief that airlines would have a better shot at consistent profits if they bulk up through mergers.

The latest deal will mean that the four biggest U.S. airlines are all the product of mergers that began in 2008. Those deals bring benefits, but they also show that putting together two airlines smoothly is not easy.

Some of the work on the latest combination has already been done. Pilots from both airlines have agreed to the outlines of a deal that should make it much easier to get a final, joint contract. And Parker is inclined to use American's computer systems such as those that track reservations and passenger information, he said on a conference call. He said past mergers have shown that it's easier to use the bigger airline's technology, because then fewer people at the smaller airline need to learn it.

Group Including Buffett To Acquire Heinz

NEW YORK (AP) — Billionaire Warren Buffett is dipping into the ketchup business as part of a \$23.3 billion deal to buy H.J. Heinz Co., uniting a legend of American investing with a mainstay of grocery store shelves.

It's the largest deal ever in the food industry and is intended to help Heinz accelerate its transformation into a global business. The company, based in Pittsburgh, also makes Classico pasta sauces, Ore-Ida potatoes and Smart Ones frozen meals.

Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway and its partner on the deal — 3G Capital, the investment firm that bought Burger King in 2010 — say Heinz will remain headquartered in Pittsburgh.

Heinz CEO William Johnson said at a news conference that taking the company private would give Heinz the flexibility to make decisions more quickly, without the burden of having to report quarterly earnings.

Heinz was founded by Henry John Heinz and his neighbor L. Clarence Noble in 1869. Their first product was grated horseradish, bottled in a clear glass to showcase its purity. The first ketchup was introduced in 1876; the company says it was the country's first commercial grade ketchup.

Obama Pushes Plan To Expand Preschool

DECATUR, Ga. (AP) — Raising hopes among parents who want preschool for all, President Barack Obama on Thursday rolled out a plan to vastly expand government-funded early childhood while keeping the price tag a secret.

Republicans, wary of high costs and questionable outcomes, made clear they have no intention of signing a blank check.

Setting up yet another clash with Republicans over spending and the proper scope of government, Obama in his State of the Union address proposed working with states to make high-quality preschool available to every American child. Two days later, he played blocks and gave fist-bumps to kids in a preschool classroom at the College Heights Early Childhood Learning Center in Decatur, casting the plan as part of a moral imperative to give every child a shot at success.

"The size of your paycheck shouldn't determine your child's future," Obama told about 600 teachers and parents at the Decatur Community Recreation Center, singling out Georgia as a model for making universal preschool a priority. "Let's fix this. Let's make sure none of our kids start out the race of life already a step behind."

Address

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visitors' gallery in the Capitol during the speech.

"The highlight of the night for me was seeing all three branches of our government in one room," she stated. "How many times do you get to see the president, vice president, secretary of state, the Supreme Court justices, and all the senators and representatives together? It was a reminder of what a fantastic system our country has. You really gain a new perspective when you go from reading about our government in textbooks to seeing our government in person."

In Hunhoff's case, she had seen a tweet from the White House Feb. 6 inviting people to apply for the opportunity to watch the State of the Union address from the White House itself.

"I jumped at the opportunity," Hunhoff stated in an email interview with the *Press & Dakotan*. "I applied and nearly immediately forgot that I had applied. The next day, I received an email saying I had been selected to attend.

There were over 2,000 people who applied and approximately 100 were selected from around the country. I felt very fortunate and honored to have been selected."

The event was part of the White House Social series, which are in-person meetings of people who engage with the White House through social media, including Twitter, Facebook, Google+ and Pinterest.

On Tuesday, Hunhoff found herself in the South Court Auditorium of the Eisenhower Executive Office Building, which adjoins the White House.

"They had screens set up where they would broadcast the 'enhanced livestream' of the president's speech," she said. "In addition to being shown to us, the livestream was available through the White House's website. The livestream had the president giving his speech and, next to it, were graphics, statistics and pictures that coordinated with what he was talking about at that point. For example, when the president was talking about the improvement of the housing market, there was a graphic of how the housing market has fared over the last number of years."

The atmosphere in the room

was "fantastic," according to Hunhoff. The 100 or so individuals in attendance were all politically-engaged people, she said.

"When the president walked into the House chamber, our entire room erupted in applause," Hunhoff stated. "When he made a joke, the room laughed. When he started talking of the need for comprehensive immigration reform, there were cheers and loud applause."

Immigration is an issue that is particularly close to Hunhoff's heart. She has accepted a two-year judicial law clerkship with the Department of Justice's Executive Office for Immigration Review at the Immigration Court in Memphis, Tenn. That job will begin in September.

Between the audible reactions, Hunhoff said people furiously typed away on their computers, phones and tablets.

"For someone like me who loves and has been involved in politics, and has been from a very young age, this room was exactly where I wanted to be during the State of the Union — short of being in the House chamber, of course," she stated.

Hunhoff has had that experience, too. In 2002, she attended the State of the Union while serving as a Senate page.

Keeping with the spirit of the event, Hunhoff used Twitter to share her thoughts on the speech.

"Overall, I thought the President gave a great speech," she said. "I really enjoyed how he spoke of the need for compromise and bipartisanship. I thought the portion of his speech near the end where he spoke of gun violence and how legislative proposals need to be given an up-and-down vote in Congress was really powerful and hopefully will lead to some action by the Congress."

Following the speech, a panel of White House officials took questions from audience members who were present or watching via social media.

Hunhoff said the experience showed her how social media can be a powerful tool.

"The White House uses it very well by using it to talk to their constituents," she stated. "Social media is no longer just for 20-somethings. It's no longer just used for chatting with friends. The White House is using it to figure out what is important to the public and its reaction — both good and bad — to what is going on in the world. Many companies/organizations are doing great things with social media,

but a lot more could stand to learn a thing or two. You have a happier constituency when you are receptive to what they're telling you. The White House has figured that out."

The whole evening was a highlight, according to Hunhoff. "It's definitely a night I will never forget," she said. "Who can say they were at the White House during the State of the Union?"

Stevens said her reaction to the speech was mixed.

"I agree with President Obama that we have a spectacular country," she stated. "I also agree with him that our economy is a mess, and he needs to get to work. I disagree that it is the fault of the GOP. He has been in office for four years, and he needs to start taking responsibility for the economic mess."

Stevens has entered her second semester working for Noem. She said every day, including Tuesday's State of the Union address, has been an exciting adventure.

"Rep. Noem has a fantastic staff," Stevens stated. "They are some of the kindest, most competent people I have ever met. Interning for Rep. Noem has been one of my best experiences in D.C. Officially, I am an 'unpaid' intern. However, that is false. Edu-

cationally, I have one of the highest paid jobs — and the best part is, no one can tax me on it."

You can follow Nathan Johnson on Twitter at [Twitter.com/AnInlandVoyage](https://twitter.com/AnInlandVoyage)

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