

Club Owner Blames Country For Deadly Fire

SANTA MARIA, Brazil (AP) — The owner of a nightclub in southern Brazil where more than 230 people died in a fire last weekend deflected blame to “the whole country,” as well as to architects and inspectors charged with making sure the building was safe, his lawyer said Wednesday.

Attorney Jader Marques said his client, Elissandro Spohr, “regretted having ever been born” because of his grief over the fire, but still blamed Sunday’s tragedy on “a succession of errors made by the whole country.”

Police investigating the blaze have said it likely started when a country music band performing at the Kiss nightclub in the college town of Santa Maria lit a flare, which ignited flammable soundproofing foam on the ceiling. That initial error was compounded by the near-total lack of emergency infrastructure such as a fire alarms or sprinkler systems, police have said. The club also had only one working door and a faulty fire extinguisher.

Marques insisted in a phone interview with The Associated Press that “my client’s responsibility is having trusted too much in the inspectors and in those responsible for the construction.”

“Hindsight is 20-20,” he said, stressing that public officials had signed off on the club.

Israel Conducts Rare Airstrike On Syria

BEIRUT (AP) — Israel conducted a rare airstrike on a military target inside Syria near the border with Lebanon, foreign officials and Syrian state TV said Wednesday, amid fears President Bashar Assad’s regime could provide powerful weapons to the Islamic militant group Hezbollah.

Regional security officials said Israel had been planning in the days leading up to the airstrike to hit a shipment of weapons bound for Hezbollah, Lebanon’s most powerful military force and a sworn enemy of the Jewish state. Among Israeli officials’ chief fears is that Assad will pass chemical weapons or sophisticated anti-aircraft missiles to Hezbollah — something that could change the balance of power in the region and greatly hinder Israel’s ability to conduct air sorties in Lebanon.

The regional officials said the shipment Israel was planning to strike included Russian-made SA-17 anti-aircraft missiles, which would be strategically “game-changing” in the hands of Hezbollah by enabling the group to carry out fiercer attacks on Israel and shoot down Israeli jets, helicopters and surveillance drones. A U.S. official said the strike hit a convoy of trucks but did not give an exact location.

Giffords Speaks Out On Gun Violence

WASHINGTON (AP) — In a dramatic appeal, wounded former Rep. Gabrielle Giffords urged Congress on Wednesday to enact tougher curbs on guns, saying, “too many children are dying” without them.

“The time is now. You must act. Be bold, be courageous, Americans are counting on you,” she told the Senate Judiciary Committee at Congress’ first gun control hearing since 20 elementary school children were shot to death in Newtown, Conn., late last year.

Giffords spoke haltingly, a result of the wounds suffered when she was shot in the head in an attempted assassination two years ago that left six others dead.

But in conflicting testimony a little more than an hour later, a top official of the National Rifle Association rejected bans on certain assault weapons and high capacity magazines advocated by President Barack Obama and gun control advocates in Congress.

Bus Driver Killed; Suspect Takes Child And Runs

MIDLAND CITY, Ala. (AP) — Police, SWAT teams and negotiators were at a rural property where a man was believed to be holed up in a homemade bunker Wednesday after fatally shooting the driver of a school bus and fleeing with a 6-year-old child passenger, authorities said.

The man boarded the stopped school bus in the town of Midland City on Tuesday afternoon and shot the driver when he refused to let the child off the bus, Dale County Sheriff Wally Olsen told WBMA-TV. The driver later died of his wounds. His identity wasn’t released.

The shooter took the child, authorities said.

County coroner Woodrow Hilboldt told The Associated Press the overnight standoff continued early Wednesday with tactical units, negotiators and other officers at the scene near a church. He said the suspect was believed to be in an underground shelter on his property.

“That’s what has been described to me as an underground bunker. Someplace to get out of the way of a tornado,” Hilboldt said.



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GOP Sees Automatic Cuts As Leverage

BY ANDREW TAYLOR
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — There’s a growing sense of resignation that the country’s political leaders will be unable or unwilling to find a way around looming automatic spending cuts despite fresh signs the cuts would threaten the recovering economy.

On one side are conservative Republicans, outnumbered and frustrated, who see the painfully large cuts as leverage in their battle to force Democrats into concessions on the budget. On the other side are President Barack Obama and his Democratic allies, who are pressing to replace some of the cuts with new tax revenues.

The predictable deadlock — and looming cuts of \$85 billion this budget year alone — has the potential to slam the economy, produce sweeping furloughs and layoffs at federal agencies and threatens hundreds of thousands of private sector jobs.

The cuts would shrink the Pentagon budget by 7 percent and force most domestic agencies to absorb a 5 percent cut concentrated in the last half of the budget year.

Just last year, GOP leaders were among the loudest voices warning of dire consequences for the military and the economy if more than \$100 billion in cuts across the board went into effect. Now, even as defense hawks fume, Republicans see the strategy as their best chance of wringing cuts from costly government benefit programs like Medicare that Obama and his

Democratic allies in Congress have been reluctant to touch.

The move is fraught with risk. Some \$43 billion would be cut from the Pentagon budget between March and October if battling Democrats and Republicans can’t agree on an alternative. Equal cuts would hit domestic programs, although the health care programs that are major drivers of future deficits are largely exempt.

“Talk about letting the sequester kick in, as though that were an acceptable thing, belies where Republicans were on this issue not that long ago,” White House Press Secretary Jay Carney said Wednesday. “This is sort of political brinksmanship of the kind that results in one primary victim, and that’s American taxpayers — the American middle class.”

The automatic cuts, known as a “sequester” in Washington-speak, are the penalty for the failures of the 2011 deficit “supercommittee” and subsequent rounds of budget talks to produce an agreement.

Along with the threatened expiration of Bush-era tax cuts, the spending cuts were a major element of the so-called fiscal cliff crisis that gripped the country at the new year. While most of the tax cuts — except for upper-bracket income — were made permanent, negotiators could only agree on a two-month reprieve to the sequester after finding \$24 billion in replacement money that reduced this year’s round of cuts from \$109 billion to \$85 billion. Eight more years of cuts, totaling almost \$1 trillion, still remain.

The austerity, economists say, would slow

down the economy. Under a formula by the Congressional Budget Office, a \$43 billion cut in defense spending could cost 300,000 jobs this year.

“In terms of the political dynamic here, defense spending is only 20 percent of the federal budget, but it’s taking 50 percent of the cuts, which means it’s going to be hitting the Republicans a lot harder than the Democrats,” said defense analyst Loren Thompson of the Lexington Institute think tank.

On Wednesday, the government reported that the economy shrank by 0.1 percent in the last quarter of 2012 and said a slowdown in defense spending and uncertainty over the automatic spending cuts could have kicked in at the start of the year.

Last year, Republicans issued dire warnings of the impact the cuts would have. Defense hawks like Sens. John McCain, R-Ariz., and Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., made campaign tours in political swing states like Virginia and Florida lambasting the cuts, warning that the reductions would hollow out the Pentagon and cost many thousands of jobs. They reminded voters that the sequester was an idea developed by Democrats during 2011 negotiations on increasing the government’s borrowing cap.

“The White House is responsible for the ‘sequester’ that threatens our national security,” House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, said in September. “History has taught us we can’t continue with policies that jeopardize our defenses or weaken our economy.”

Teen Performer At Inauguration Fatally Shot

BY DON BABWIN
Associated Press

CHICAGO — A 15-year-old girl who had performed in President Barack Obama’s inauguration festivities is the latest face on the ever-increasing homicide toll in the president’s hometown, killed in a Chicago park as she talked with friends by a gunman who apparently was not even aiming at her.

Chicago police said Hadiya Pendleton was in a park about a mile from Obama’s home in a South Side neighborhood Tuesday afternoon when a man opened fire on the group. Hadiya was shot in the back as she tried to escape.

The city’s 42nd slaying is part of Chicago’s bloodiest January in more than a decade, following on the heels of 2012, which ended with more than 500 homicides for the first time since 2008. It also comes at a time when Obama, spurred by the Connecticut elementary school massacre in December, is actively pushing for tougher gun laws.

Hadiya’s father, Nathaniel Pendleton, spoke Wednesday at a Chicago police news conference, which was held in the same park where his daughter died.

“He took the light of my life,”



TERRENCE ANTONIO JAMES/CHICAGO TRIBUNE/MCT
Chicago Ald. Will Burns, 4th ward, from left, Cleopatra Cowley-Pendleton, and Kimiko Pettis attend a press conference at Harsh Park in Chicago, Illinois, Wednesday, January 30, 2013. An \$11,000 reward was announced for information about Tuesday’s slaying of Hadiya Pendleton.

Pendleton said. He then spoke directly to the killer: “Look at yourself, just know that you took a bright person, an innocent person, a nonviolent person.” Chicago Police Superintendent Garry McCarthy consoled him, the girl’s mother and 10-year-old brother.

Hadiya was a bright kid who was killed just as she was “wondering about which lofty goal she wanted to achieve,” her godfather,

Damon Stewart, told The Associated Press. Hadiya had been a majorette with the King College Prep band.

“She was a very active kid, doing dance, cheerleading, who felt like she could accomplish just about anything, a very good student who had big dreams about what she wanted to be, a doctor, an attorney,” said Stewart, a Chicago police officer and attor-

ney. “She was constantly getting good grades.”

White House press secretary Jay Carney said Wednesday that the president and the first lady’s “thoughts and prayers are with” the teen’s family, adding: “And as the president has said, we will never be able to eradicate every act of evil in this country, but if we can save any one child’s life, we have an obligation to try when it comes to the scourge of gun violence.”

In Chicago, gangs routinely and often indiscriminately open fire. Mayor Rahm Emanuel and McCarthy are pushing for tougher local, state and national gun laws and longer prison sentences for offenders.

About three blocks from Hadiya’s school, she and a group of 10-12 young people, including members of her volleyball team, had taken refuge under a canopy at a park to avoid the rain Tuesday afternoon. A man climbed a fence behind the park, ran at the group and started shooting, and then jumped back over the fence and into a white Nissan. The group scattered, but Hadiya was shot once in the back and a teenage boy was shot in the leg.

Implementing Exercise into Everyday Life with Diabetes



Have you ever tried to start an exercise program that would help to lower your blood sugar level only to run into a road block?

Have you ever wanted to start an exercise program but don’t know where to begin?

Have you been told that you should “lose weight” or “walk more” to decrease your blood sugar levels?

If any of the above statements describe you – you might be interested in a new program starting at Avera Sacred Heart Hospital that will help you establish a personalized exercise program that fits your lifestyle.

WHO: Avera Sacred Heart Hospital Occupational Therapy Department, Dakota Diabetes, Avera Sacred Heart Wellness Center, and the University of South Dakota Occupational Therapy Department.

WHAT: A new program regarding implementing exercise into everyday life with diabetes. The program will be based on the occupational therapy theory of Occupational Adaptation. This theory holds that in order to be functional in life activities, a person must make adaptations to his/her environment and self. Most people adapt to changes in the world around them everyday without even noticing. But when a person confronts a particularly difficult situation, sometimes this process gets stalled. It is at that point that a person may need

some assistance from an occupational therapist to help the person through the adaptation process. In this instance, being faced with a diagnosis of diabetes and having to implement the multitude of lifestyle changes that need to occur can sometimes be overwhelming. In light of the new research about exercise and diabetes control, this program will focus specifically on implementing exercise into everyday life. The program will consist of 6 x 1 hour sessions that will address:

1. The Occupational Adaptation Process and how it relates to exercise
2. Cardiovascular vs. Strength Training
3. Developing a Personalized Program that actually fits into a person’s lifestyle
4. Time management
5. Overcoming Barriers to exercise
6. Coping
7. Implementation of that program with an actual practice session at the ASHH Wellness Center

The cost of the program is \$70 for the entire 6 sessions. At this point, this program is not coverable by insurance; however, no one will be turned away for inability to pay. The participant will leave the program with an understanding of his/her life roles and schedules and how to integrate exercise within a framework that allows for continued participation in occupation. He/she will also have a written copy of a program that he/she designs with the help of an occupational therapist, dia-

betes educator, and exercise physiologist.

In addition to the above benefits, this program will also be used for a research study by the USD Department of Occupational Therapy. The study’s aim is to determine if this type of intervention produces a statistically significant positive change in the participant’s behavior. As such, the participant will be asked to fill out several short forms prior to the beginning of the sessions and again several months after the sessions are completed. Results of the study would be available to any physician who is interested.

WHEN: The groups will be offered on a scheduled basis. Each set of 6 sessions will have no more than 5 participants to keep the participant to therapist ratio low.

WHERE: Groups will be scheduled through the Avera Sacred Heart Hospital Occupational Therapy Department at 605-668-8268. Participants will be sent a packet with their scheduled sessions and locations of those sessions.

WHY: Recent research suggests that people with diabetes who implement 150 minutes of cardiovascular exercise along with 2-3 sessions of strengthening activities on non-consecutive days per week have lower HbA1C levels and better control of their blood sugars. We feel that examining a person’s current lifestyle and his/her ability to adapt combined with

specific education regarding exercise will assist the person to develop an individualized exercise program that may be more likely to succeed.

HOW: There are several ways to be part of this program. First of all, you can sign up to be contacted with more information through the sign up sheet available through Dakota Diabetes (Susan Barnes). You can also contact the Avera Sacred Heart Hospital Occupational Therapy Department at 605-668-8268. The Occupational Therapy Department will have a staff member contact you with more information. You are not obligated to participate in this program by signing up or requesting more information. If you decide to participate, the Occupational Therapy Department will talk with the physician who manages your diabetes to make sure that you are medically cleared to participate. Then they will send you a packet with more information that would need to be filled out. You can participate in the group sessions without being part of the research portion if you wish. The \$70 fee is due at the time of the first session. However, if this fee would prevent you from participating in the sessions, please let us know. No one will be turned away for inability to pay.

If you have any further Questions, please contact Beryl Olson at 605-668-8268.