

Woman Mentioned Early Suicide Attempt

DALLAS (AP) — A woman whose death in a Texas jail has raised suspicions about the official conclusion that she hanged herself told a guard during the booking process that she had tried to kill herself in the past, the sheriff said Wednesday.

Waller County Sheriff Glenn Smith told The Associated Press during a telephone interview that Sandra Bland told a jailer July 10 about a previous suicide attempt, while being asked a series of questions posed to each person booked into the jail. He did not provide further details about the conversation.

Asked about Smith's assertion, the attorney representing Bland's family, Cannon Lambert, said relatives have "no evidence" that she ever attempted suicide or had been treated for depression.

It was not immediately clear why the department hadn't previously disclosed details of conversations with Bland, or whether they were shared with other jail staff. It also wasn't clear whether Bland was on suicide watch or otherwise specially monitored during her weekend incarceration.

A second jailer also interviewed Bland, according to the sheriff. The 28-year-old black woman from Illinois said she was not depressed but was upset about her arrest, which occurred following a confrontation with a white officer who had stopped her for a minor traffic violation.

Video Stirs Debate About Police Actions

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — When Sandra Bland refused to put out her cigarette, the police officer opened her car door and tried dragging her out of the vehicle. She asked at least four times why she was being arrested and got no answer. When she told him she had epilepsy, he shouted, "Good!"

The tense dashcam video of the 28-year-old black woman getting pulled over by a white Texas state trooper for not signaling a lane change renewed the national debate Wednesday over how police treat blacks and outraged some critics of law enforcement who saw a motorist who was squarely within her rights.

Bland, who talked about police brutality on social media before her arrest, seemed to be aware of her civil liberties. And a range of experts said the officer's orders to the 28-year-old motorist were probably lawful, even if his behavior appeared exceptionally aggressive for the circumstances.

Bland's traffic stop drew special attention because she was found dead in her jail cell three days later, and family and supporters continue to dispute that she hanged herself with a plastic garbage bag, as authorities have concluded. The FBI is supervising a state investigation into the death.

Experts including former law enforcement officials and civil rights attorneys say the video is not a clear-cut case of an officer overstepping his authority in the face of an agitated motorist.

'Trumpism' Dominates GOP Race

AIKEN, S.C. (AP) — Donald Trump is on his way to the Mexican border, the latest event in a presidential campaign some of his rivals would like to dismiss as a sideshow — a "carnival act," as one puts it. But he's been stealing their thunder for days and left them scrambling to adjust to a race dominated by a bombastic longshot.

The billionaire developer and reality TV host will be in Laredo, Texas, on Thursday, highlighting his unyielding stance on immigration. The trip will revisit a topic that has stirred criticism that has now grown into open hostility from some Republican contenders.

From party heavyweights like Jeb Bush to recently announced candidates like Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker and Ohio Gov. John Kasich, the contenders are confronted by Trump's hair-trigger habit of calling out his critics by name, vilifying the GOP establishment and roiling the debate over immigration and more.

In Washington, former Texas Gov. Rick Perry was asked about Trump's planned trip on to Laredo. He snapped, "I hope he can find the border because I'm not sure he's ever been there before."

This, after Perry denounced Trump's campaign as a "cancer on conservatism" and "barking carnival act" in a speech that laced into "Trumpism: a toxic mix of demagoguery, mean-spiritedness and nonsense that will lead the Republican Party to perdition if pursued."

Minimum-Wage Proposals Gain Ground

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — The push for a higher minimum wage gained momentum on both sides of the country Wednesday, with New York embracing an eventual \$15 an hour for the state's 200,000 fast-food workers and the huge University of California system announcing the same raise for its employees.

"How we support our workers and their families impacts Californians who might never set foot on one of our campuses," said UC President Janet Napolitano, who oversees 10 campuses, including UCLA and Berkeley. "It's the right thing to do."

The 240,000-student University of California becomes the nation's largest public university to commit itself to the \$15-an-hour wage that has become the rallying cry of many labor groups in recent months.

So far, Los Angeles, Seattle, San Francisco, Oakland and Berkeley have approved phased-in increases that eventually will take their minimum wage to \$15 an hour, or about \$31,200 a year. On Tuesday, Los Angeles County, the nation's most populous county, voted to craft a law to do the same over five years.

In New York, the state Wage Board endorsed a proposal to set a \$15 minimum wage for workers at fast-food restaurants with 30 or more locations. The increase would be phased in over three years in New York City and over six years elsewhere.

Federal Charges Include Hate Crimes For Accused Shooter

BY ERIC TUCKER AND MEG KINNARD
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The man accused of killing nine black church members in Charleston, South Carolina, was motivated by racial hatred and a desire to commit a "notorious attack" when he opened fire inside a historic house of worship last month, according to a federal grand jury indictment issued Wednesday that makes him eligible for the death penalty.

The 33-count federal indictment charges Dylann Roof, 21, with hate crimes, firearms violations and obstructing the practice of religion in the June 17 shootings at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church.

The charges announced Wednesday by Attorney General Loretta Lynch are in addition to state murder charges brought against Roof days after the shooting.

The Justice Department has not decided whether it will seek the death penalty against Roof, nor whether its prosecution will come prior to the state's case. But in mounting a federal case, Justice Department prosecutors made clear that they consider the killings rooted in racial hatred and the type of attack that their hate-crime statutes are designed to cover.

Because South Carolina has no state hate-crime law, federal charges were needed to adequately deal with a defendant who "decided to seek out and murder African-Americans because of their race," Lynch said.

The state's case has so far been sparse

in its details, but the federal grand jury indictment accuses Roof — who is white and had appeared in photos waving Confederate flags — of setting his sights for months on murderous attacks on blacks because of their race and of wanting to carry out violence in a black church.

The indictment describes Roof's use of a personal manuscript in which he decried integration, used racial slurs to refer to blacks and disparaged them as inferior to whites. He planned for months to increase racial tensions throughout the country and seek retribution for perceived wrongs he thought had been committed against white people, Lynch said.

When it came to picking a target, the indictment says, he purposefully selected the historic church — a centuries-old religious institution rooted in South Carolina history — "in order to make his attack more notorious," according to the indictment. Survivors told police that he used racial insults during the attack.

"To carry out these twin goals of fanning racial flames and exacting revenge, Roof further decided to seek out and murder African-Americans because of their race," Lynch said.

He took advantage of his victims' generosity when they welcomed Roof into their Bible-study group, she said.

"The parishioners had Bibles. Dylann Roof had his .45-caliber Glock pistol, and eight magazines loaded with hollow-point bullets."

Several of the counts — including weapons violations and obstructing the practice of religion, resulting in death

— are punishable by death. Lynch said the Justice Department's decision over whether to pursue the death penalty would be made after consulting with victims' families, some of whom expressed forgiveness for Roof when he appeared in court after the shooting.

The Justice Department has brought a couple hundred hate crime cases in the last five years, but even in circumstances in which the motive seems clear-cut, it can still be challenging to prove that a defendant was primarily driven by a victim's race or religion as opposed to other factors frequently invoked by defense attorneys, such as drug addiction or mental illness.

Last year, a federal appeals court in Ohio overturned hate-crime convictions against Amish men and women accused in beard- and hair-cutting attacks against fellow Amish people who were thought to have defied the community leader.

The court held that the jury had received incorrect instructions about how to weigh the role of religion in the attacks and that prosecutors should have had to prove the assaults wouldn't have happened but for religious motives. Their sentences were reduced.

Prosecutors in the Roof case appear to have a lot to work with, said Jens Ohlins, a law professor at Cornell University who has followed the case.

It's going to be, he predicted, "very, very easy for a federal jury to conclude that the crime was committed for racial reasons because of the mountains of evidence that Roof left behind."

Military Says No To Arming Servicemen At US Bases

BY JAMES ROSEN
McClatchy Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — The Defense Department on Thursday has come out squarely against giving weapons to every service member on a domestic military installation despite a growing clamor in Congress for such a step in the wake of the Tennessee shooting rampage.

Navy Capt. Jeff Davis, a Pentagon spokesman, said Defense Secretary Ashton Carter is awaiting recommendations from the five military services on fortifying their recruiting centers and domestic bases following the July 15 assault that left six people dead — four Marines, a Navy corpsman and the shooter, Kuwait-born Muhammad Youssef Abdulazez — at a naval reserve center in Chattanooga.

"We do not support arming all military personnel for a variety of reasons," Davis told reporters at the Pentagon. "(There are) safety concerns, the prohibitive cost for use-of-force and weapons training, qualification costs as well as compliance with multiple weapons-training laws."

A bipartisan group of lawmakers, however, advanced legislation to remove at least some of the limits imposed on service members in the United States under Presidents George H.W. Bush, a Republican, and Bill Clinton, a Democrat, in the 1990s.

Sen. Jerry Moran, a Kansas Republican, introduced a bill Thursday that would repeal partial prohibitions on military personnel carrying firearms at domestic installations.

"Our men and women in uniform are banned from exercising this constitutional right when fulfilling their duties on American soil," Moran said. "This infringement on the constitutional rights of our service members has caused American military installations and DOD sites to become increasingly vulnerable to those who wish to do harm."

In addition to the Chattanooga tragedy, Moran cited



TIM BARBER/CHATTANOOGA TIMES FREE PRESS/TNS
A Chattanooga policeman talks on his radio near two shell casing markers outside the Reserve Recruitment Center at Highway 153 and Lee Highway on Thursday, July 16, in Chattanooga, Tenn.

four earlier attacks since 2009 when gunmen killed and wounded military personnel at the Navy Yard in Washington, D.C., the Pentagon in Virginia, a recruiting center in Little Rock, Ark., and at Fort Hood in Texas.

Moran's measure would repeal a Defense Department directive issued Feb. 25, 1992, and an Army regulation issued in March 1993, both of which places limits on where and under what circumstances service members can carry loaded weapons while on base.

In the House, Republican Rep. Scott DesJarlais and Democratic Rep. Steve Cohen, both of Tennessee, gathered 17 co-sponsors from both parties for a similar bill.

"We know our military facilities and recruitment centers are targets, and the five victims of last week's attack in Chattanooga are sad evidence that more must be done to keep them safe," Cohen said.

Two other Republican lawmakers, Sen. Steve Daines of Montana, an Iraq war veteran, and Rep. Duncan Hunter of

California put forward a narrower bill that would authorize one armed service member to be placed at a military recruiting center, many of which are at shopping malls, high schools, universities and other public places to encourage greater access.

Some Americans were not waiting for Congress or the Pentagon to change their laws or practices.

Armed citizens, some alone and others in groups, were standing guard at recruiting centers in Texas, Alabama, Ohio, Virginia and Wisconsin.

Army veteran Terry Jackson said he felt it was his duty to guard the recruiting center in Cleburne, Texas.

"It was unacceptable for our soldiers, sailors, our men and women of the military to go over and serve and go into combat, and then come back here to the homeland and be gunned down on their home duty stations," Jackson told the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*.

A former Special Operations officer, who requested anonymity in order to speak

candidly about armed forces' training, said many service members lack sufficient skills to carry loaded weapons.

"If you're going to be involved at recruiting centers or protecting the public, you should be able to fire at least 84 percent of your rounds into a life-size target at 25 yards," the officer told McClatchy.

He said most military personnel are not at that level of weapons proficiency.

Nevertheless, some military leaders disagreed with the current prohibitions in place.

At his Senate confirmation hearing to become Army chief of staff, Gen. Mark Milley said the Pentagon should weigh arming recruiters and other personnel.

"I think under certain conditions, both on military bases and in outstations, we should seriously consider it, and under certain conditions, I think it's appropriate," Milley told the Senate Armed Services Committee on Tuesday.

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