

Former Inmate Dies In Texas Shootout

DECATUR, Texas (AP) — A former Colorado inmate and white supremacist at the center of a two-state mystery is dead after a high-speed chase and shootout with Texas deputies. Now investigators are trying to piece together whether he killed the chief of Colorado prisons and a pizza delivery man and where he was headed when Texas police stopped him.

Evan Spencer Ebel, 28, is a Colorado parolee with a long record of convictions since 2003 for various crimes including assaulting a prison guard in 2008. He was a member of a white supremacist prison gang called the 211s, a federal law enforcement official told The Associated Press. The official was not authorized to speak publicly about the case and spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity.

Colorado officials would not confirm Ebel’s gang ties or say whether they had anything to do with the death of prisons director Tom Clements. But they said that, since the Tuesday night killing, state troopers have provided extra security for Colorado government officials.

“We are at a heightened alert,” said Steve Johnson of the Colorado Bureau of Investigation at a Friday news conference here.

Denver police said they were “confident” he was also involved in the death of Nathan Leon, 27, the pizza man whose body was found Sunday.

2 Teens Arrested In Slaying Of Baby In Stroller

BRUNSWICK, Ga. (AP) — Police arrested two teenagers Friday who are suspected in the shooting death of a 13-month-old baby in a stroller and wounding the baby’s mother during an attempted robbery.

Seventeen-year-old De’Marquis Elkins is charged as an adult with first-degree murder, along with a 14-year-old who was not identified because he is a juvenile, Police Chief Tobe Green said.

Police announced the arrest Friday afternoon after combing school records and canvassing neighborhoods searching for the pair. The chief said the motive of the “horrendous act” was still under investigation and the weapon had not been found.

The mother, Sherry West, wept Friday while she told The Associated Press that she pleaded with the gunman and a younger accomplice who approached her Thursday morning while she walked near their home in coastal Brunswick.

“He asked me for money and I said I didn’t have it,” she said. “When you have a baby, you spend all your money on babies. They’re expensive. And he kept asking and I just said ‘I don’t have it.’ And he said, ‘Do you want me to kill your baby?’ And I said, ‘No, don’t kill my baby!’”

Cyprus Lawmakers To Vote On Bailout Plan

NICOSIA, Cyprus (AP) — Cypriot lawmakers were finalizing Friday a new plan they hope will raise enough money to qualify the country for a bailout package and help it avoid financial ruin next week.

Cyprus’ president, Nicos Anastasiades, will travel to Brussels on Saturday to present the plan to the country’s prospective creditors, its fellow eurozone countries and the International Monetary Fund. There has been no indication yet that they will accept it.

The package of nine laws was expected to be voted on in Parliament Friday night, three days after lawmakers decisively rejected a plan that would have seized up to 10 percent of people’s bank deposits.

Cyprus has been told to raise 5.8 billion euros (\$7.5 billion) to qualify for 10 billion euros (\$12.9 billion) in rescue loans from the eurozone and the IMF.

The country faces a pressing Monday deadline, when the European Central Bank has said will stop provide emergency funding to the country’s banks if a new plan is not in place. Without the ECB’s support, Cypriot banks would collapse on Tuesday, pushing the country toward bankruptcy and a potential exit from the 17-country euro currency union.

FAA To Close 149 Air Traffic Towers Due To Cuts

CHICAGO (AP) — Under orders to trim hundreds of millions of dollars from its budget, the Federal Aviation Administration released a final list Friday of 149 air traffic control towers that it will close at small airports around the country starting early next month.

The closures will not force the shutdown of any of those airports, but pilots will be left to coordinate takeoffs and landings among themselves over a shared radio frequency with no help from ground controllers. All pilots are trained to fly using those procedures.

The plan has raised concerns since a preliminary list of facilities was released a month ago. Those worries include the impact on safety and the potential financial effect on communities that rely on airports to help attract businesses and tourists.

“We will work with the airports and the operators to ensure the procedures are in place to maintain the high level of safety at non-towered airports,” FAA Administrator Michael Huerta said in a statement.

Newtown Victims Meet With Killer’s Father

NEWTOWN, Conn. (AP) — When Alissa and Robbie Parker met face to face recently with the father of the young man who killed their daughter and 19 other first-graders at Sandy Hook Elementary School, they weren’t angry with him and didn’t blame him for the massacre.

Instead, the Parkers said they and Peter Lanza shared their condolences for one another and talked about his son, Adam Lanza, during the emotional meeting, which lasted more than an hour.

“I don’t feel like he should be held responsible for what happened that day,” Alissa Parker told “CBS This Morning” during the second part of an interview that aired Friday. “That was not ultimately his decision to do that, so how can I hold him responsible? Were there missteps in the raising of his son? Possibly.”

Adam Lanza, 20, fatally shot 20 children and six educators with a military-style rifle on Dec. 14, then killed himself as police arrived. Authorities say he also killed his mother, Nancy, at their Newtown home before he went to the school. The Parkers lost their 6-year-old daughter, Emilie, in the rampage.

Alissa Parker said she told Peter Lanza that there was an opportunity to learn from the killings and his cooperation was vital.

Obama Appeal To Israeli Public Means Risk

BY JOSEF FEDERMAN  
Associated Press

JERUSALEM — In a landmark speech to young Israelis this week, the visiting U.S. President Barack Obama delivered an unorthodox appeal couched behind warm words of affinity for their country: Urge your leaders to change their ways and take bold new steps to reach peace with the Palestinians.

The message, potentially risking the ire of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, marked a gamble by the U.S. leader as he searches for ways to restart long-stalled Mideast peace efforts. With no breakthroughs coming out of the visit on the Palestinian front, Obama must now hope that the power of the presidency, combined with the goodwill he accumulated during the 48-hour visit, can persuade a still-skeptical Israeli leadership to abandon some deeply entrenched views and get negotiations moving again.

After a first term plagued by repeated run-ins with Netanyahu and perceptions among Israelis that he was cool to their cause and perhaps even hostile to their prime minister, Obama certainly succeeded in his goal of resetting the relationship. He was treated like a rock star in meetings with Israeli leaders and everyday people, and his every moment was followed by a fawning Israeli media.

“Israel is in Love,” Yediot Ahronot, Israel’s largest daily, wrote in a headline Friday.

Obama and Netanyahu, who have appeared uncomfortable together in the past, smiled, joked and exchanged pleasant small talk throughout the visit, with much of the conversation caught on live microphones permitted to join them. Netanyahu seemed almost giddy at times.

But hidden behind the public displays of affection, Obama delivered a powerful message. In the keynote address to Israeli young adults,

he implored the gathering to press their leaders to take risks for peace.

He also had some tough words for his audience, criticizing Israeli settlements as “counter-productive” and speaking movingly of Palestinians suffering under Israeli military occupation.

“Let me say this as a politician. I can promise you this. Political leaders will never take risks if the people do not push them to take some risks,” he said. “Ordinary people can accomplish extraordinary things.”

While addressed at the Israeli public, the nationally broadcast speech was also aimed at Netanyahu. On the most public of stages, Obama embraced the key argument of Israel’s left wing: that the status quo, in which Israel controls millions of disenfranchised Palestinians, is unsustainable and that making concessions for peace is good not only for the Palestinians, but vitally needed for Israel itself to be able to survive.

Obama’s speech, even the lines most critical of Israel, was repeatedly interrupted by applause from the preselected audience largely comprised of university students. Perhaps the loudest ovation came when he called for the establishment of a Palestinian state.

“The speech gave young people a new spirit to push for a two-state solution,” said Isaac Shickman, a 24-year-old Jerusalem university student who was in the audience. “It made me think of what I can do to promote peace and change in the country and the region.”

Handled improperly, Obama’s gambit might have backfired. Early on in his presidency, Obama’s public criticism of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and east Jerusalem raised tensions with Israel and contributed to more than four years of deadlock in peace efforts.

The Palestinians claim both areas, captured by Israel in the 1967 Mideast war, for their future state and have refused to negotiate while Israel continues to expand its settlements there.

Julian Zelizer, a historian at Princeton Uni-

versity, said Thursday’s speech came straight out of Obama’s playbook back home.

“This was President Obama using some of the tactics that he uses here, meaning trying to speak directly to the people to pressure the leaders to do something, rather than focusing on the leaders themselves,” he said.

He said the tactic risked antagonizing Netanyahu, but that Obama deftly handled the visit. Obama’s warm words for Israel, his repeated pledges to Israeli security, a visit to the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial and the many joint interests of the two countries all helped blunt potential criticism.

“It’s a successful speech, but it’s a far cry from solving the problem,” he said.

In a statement, Netanyahu’s office said he “shares President Obama’s view regarding the need to advance a peace that ensures the security of Israel’s citizens.” It would not comment on Obama’s appeals to the public.

Israelis themselves were divided over the significance of the speech.

“It was a seminal speech, even an historic one,” wrote Shalom Yerushalmi, a commentator in the Maariv daily. “Will it work? Who knows?”

Tzipi Livni, the leader of a small dovish political party who is Netanyahu’s new chief negotiator, said she hoped Obama’s message would rally more Israelis to the country’s peace camp.

“I would be very happy if Israeli citizens who heard him were convinced that this is what needs to be done,” she said.

But Naftali Bennett, a Cabinet minister who leads a pro-settler party, rejected the speech. “A Palestinian state is not the right way,” he wrote on his Facebook page.

Such divisions in the Cabinet are a key reason why it seems unlikely that Netanyahu will make any bold new concessions to restart talks. U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry is expected back in Israel on Saturday night to discuss the matter.

Senators Close To Deal On Immigration Reform

BY ERICA WERNER  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Senators working on a sweeping immigration bill scrambled Friday to sketch out a deal before Congress takes a two-week recess, even as a last-minute dispute over wages for lower-skilled workers flared between business and labor groups.

The public clash between the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and AFL-CIO over wages for lower-skilled workers underscored the high stakes involved in legislation that would dramatically reshape the U.S. immigration and employment landscape, putting 11 million illegal immigrants on a path to citizenship while allowing tens of thousands of new high- and low-skilled workers into the country.

The chamber and AFL-CIO, negotiating through the so-called Gang of Eight senators, had reached significant agreement on a new visa program to bring up to 200,000 lower-skilled workers a year to the country. The number of visas would fluctuate according to demand, and the workers would be able to change jobs and could seek permanent residency.

But the AFL-CIO was pushing for higher wages for the workers than the chamber had agreed to so far.

The dispute remained unsettled into the evening, but appeared unlikely to seriously derail work on the bill. The eight senators in the negotiating group, including Sens. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., and John McCain, R-Ariz., were aiming to finalize as many details as possible before leaving town so that the recess could be devoted to drafting the legislation, which would then be made public when the lawmakers return in April.

“We’re close,” Sen. Jeff Flake, R-Ariz., another member of the group, said after one round of meetings Friday. “The biggest issue has always been the future flow” of workers. Flake said there were only “a few minor items”

left to deal with apart from the Chamber of Commerce-AFL-CIO matter.

The AFL-CIO argued that the Chamber of Commerce was trying to pay below median wage for any given group of workers, but the chamber said it would pay about the same as American workers get.

In the case of housekeepers, for example, the chamber proposal would mean \$8.44 per hour, which falls below the federal poverty level for a family of four, while the AFL-CIO position was \$11.39 per hour, according to one official familiar with the labor perspective. The new visas would cover dozens of professions such as long-term care workers and hotel and hospitality employees.

As the day wore on, senators met hour after hour in a private chamber just off the Senate floor, and the chamber and AFL-CIO traded jabs, each accusing the other side of imperiling negotiations.

A proposal from the Gang of Eight that would divide the workers into three wage categories — two of them beneath median wage

— was rejected by the AFL as insufficient, said Ana Avendano, assistant to the AFL-CIO president for immigration and community action. Avendano said the AFL proposed language stipulating that the new visas only should be used when employing foreign workers would not hurt wages and working conditions of U.S. workers, but that Republicans rejected that.

“It’s shocking to us that the Republicans are willing to hold up the bill and they’re saying that this bill is not moving forward without poverty level wages,” Avendano said. “So we’re hopeful that they will see the light and recognize how important this issue is and agree to move forward.”

Randy Johnson, the chamber’s senior vice president for labor, immigration and employee benefits, said the chamber simply wanted to stick with current law requiring that temporary workers be paid whichever is greater: what comparable American workers make or the prevailing wage as determined by the

Labor Department.

“We’re puzzled as to why the unions would risk jeopardizing the negotiations by pushing for a provision that would drive up wages for immigrant workers above American workers,” Johnson said in a statement.

Senators seemed to take the last-minute jockeying in stride.

“People have a lot at stake here, this is a huge deal. We’re talking about the lives of 11 million people just to start with, so I understand why passions are high and sentiments are high,” McCain told reporters Friday.

“We just make steady progress,” he said. “We take two steps forward, and then we take a step back.”

McCain and Flake plan to visit the Arizona border next Wednesday with Schumer and Sen. Michael Bennet, D-Colo., another Gang of Eight member, to inspect conditions there as they finalize their bill. The legislation would impose new border security requirements before any path to citizenship could begin, which is critical to Republicans in the group.

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# Sensible



sen-si-ble  
*Adjective*

1. Chosen in accordance with wisdom or prudence; likely to be of benefit.  
**Synonyms:** reasonable - wise - judicious - perceptible - rational

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