



TOPCOPS INTERNATIONAL NEWSMAGAZINE

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MEN AND WOMEN OF LAW ENFORCEMENT FROM AROUND THE WORLD

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Bonjour, bienvenue chez le premier on-line périodique de nouvelles pur officiers de police du monde entier ... TopCops ! Merçi à tous nos membres. (Werner Glasse)
Bonjour! Bienvenue à la meilleure revue internationale pour policiers à travers le monde disponible sur l'internet... TopCops! Merçi à tous nos membres. (Randall Perry)
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Over the years we have tried to bring our readers news from around the world through the publication of a periodic Newsmagazine. The idea was to publish one every month but that has not worked out over the past year. However, it is our endeavor to publish a monthly publication for 2009. With the assistance of my good friend, Derwin Pannell, we will give this project one more chance. All articles in this publication was taken from online newspapers and brought to our readers as a convenience with no profit or gain to anyone associated with TopCops on the Internet <http://www.topcops.com/>

THE FOLLOWING ITEMS ARE FOUND IN THIS MONTHS ISSUE:

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Officers cleared in shooting

By William Kibler, bkibler@altoonamirror.com POSTED: December 14, 2008 <http://www.altoonamirror.com/page/content.detail/id/514156.html>

An Altoona Police Department review has cleared three officers involved in a shootout that seriously wounded a city man Nov. 22. The officers are back to work in their normal roles after the paid leave that departmental policy requires after an officer fires a gun and wounds or kills someone.

The gun battle started on 14th Street near 16th Avenue after officers Dwayne Eichenlaub, Joseph Merrill and Jack Kuhn encountered John A. Ray during a routine traffic inquiry, according to the criminal complaint filed by state police. Ray, wanted in Philadelphia County for failing to register as a Megans Law violator, bolted and began firing a 9mm handgun at the officers after one began checking him for weapons, state police said.

The officers chased and fired back, hitting Ray in the arm, hip and legs as he took cover between parked cars on 14th Street, state police said. Trooper Richard Brozenich said he believed the officers were justified in what they did. City police conducted an internal investigation, then a Firearms Review Board discussed reports on the case and recommended that Chief Janice

Freehling clear the officers - which she did. "We would not return them to duty if we felt they were having issues that would affect their job performance," she said. In keeping with department policy, the officers met with a psychologist and can continue to get counseling if they want, Freehling said. Ray was taken to Altoona Regional Health Systems intensive care unit, but he is now at Blair County Prison in lieu of \$250,000 cash bail.

He is charged with attempted homicide, aggravated assault, illegal possession of a gun, failing to register as a Megans Law violator and possession of a small amount of marijuana. A prior felony conviction for aggravated indecent assault prohibits Ray from possessing a firearm, according to the complaint.

In addition to failing to register as a Megans Law violator in Philadelphia, Ray failed to register in Altoona, where he was staying on the 1600 block of 14th Street for several weeks with a cousin, the complaint stated. A preliminary hearing is set for Central Court Jan. 7. Brozenich, the investigating officer, is waiting for a ballistics report, which he said he doesnt expect to need for the preliminary hearing.

State police handled the criminal investigation at the request of Freehling to eliminate her departments potential conflict of interest. The review board consists of the deputy chief, the commander of patrol, the commander of criminal investigations, a department firearms instructor and the president of Mountain Lodge No. 8, Fraternal Order of Police. Mirror Staff Writer William Kibler is at 949-7038.

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Official police site: Singapore police department - <http://www.spf.gov.sg/>

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<http://www.polizei.hessen.de/internetzentral/broker.jsp?uTem=bf71055-bb1d-50f1-2860-72700266cb59&uCon=03d205dc-59e8-f03e-07e6-11142c388eb9&uBasVariantCon=ed83d448-9a76-4e11-8a5b-28e46ce02000>

Courthouse killer escapes death penalty by Greg Bluestein, Associated Press

Sunday, December 14, 2008 (12-14) 04:00 PST Atlanta --

After more than three years and a tangled trail of frustrating legal delays, the man who killed four people in a brazen courthouse escape was sentenced Saturday to prison for life without parole and hundreds of years more.

IMAGES



John Spink / Associated Press

Yet prosecutors who spent the last month urging jurors to sentence one of Atlanta's most notorious criminals to death were not celebrating. "The community has spoken," Fulton County District Attorney Paul Howard said at an emotional press conference after the sentencing of Brian Nichols. "Even though we are puzzled and terribly disappointed by the decision, we must accept the conclusion provided by our community."

It showed how difficult it is to get a capital sentence in Atlanta's Fulton County, where death penalties are rare even in a state where support for capital punishment is widespread. Georgia tied for third in carrying out executions last year.

And it underscored the problems Georgia prosecutors say they frequently face with the requirement that death sentences can only be returned by unanimous jury verdicts. Nichols, 37, was found guilty last month of murdering a judge, a court reporter, a sheriff's deputy and a federal agent in the March 2005 rampage. After four days deliberating on whether to recommend the death penalty, the jury deadlocked at 9-3. Nichols will probably die in prison after Superior Court Judge James Bodiford handed down the maximum prison sentence on each of 54 charges.

The deadlock devastated prosecutors, who had turned down an offer from Nichols' attorneys to plead guilty in exchange for a life sentence. The trial has already cost more than \$2 million, likely the most expensive in state history. And it may not be over yet: Howard said he's talked to the U.S. attorney about a federal death penalty trial for the federal agent's slaying. In the meantime, Howard and some state legislative leaders said Georgia's death penalty rules should be changed.

"Georgia is a conservative state, but there are pockets where it is not," said state Rep. Barry Fleming, a Republican who led a failed bid last year to allow judges to approve death penalties even if one or two jurors voted against it. "There are people who will attempt to nullify the law when they get on the jury." The last time a Fulton County jury issued a death sentence was eight years ago, and only then for a triple murderer who killed a toddler. One factor could be race. The county is 43 percent black, and numerous polls and surveys have found that blacks are more likely than whites to oppose capital punishment.

Eight of the jurors were black. The three who voted against the death penalty would not comment, but Howard said other jurors told him the three holdouts refused to deliberate. He said he was told that one was wearing headphones during the closed-door discussions this week. Two jurors who spoke at Howard's news conference but declined to be identified said they worked hard to try to reach a verdict.

"I believe Brian Nichols did not win. In his own words, he said it's not his DNA to stay in jail, which is what he has to look forward to the rest of his life," said Christina Greenway, daughter of slain court reporter Julie Ann Brandau. "I'm not disappointed and I have no regrets." Nichols was being escorted to his trial for rape when he overpowered a deputy guarding him and stole her gun. He burst into the courtroom and shot and killed Superior Court Judge Rowland Barnes, Brandau and sheriff's Deputy Hoyt Teasley.

He fled downtown Atlanta and managed to evade hundreds of police officers searching for him overnight. In Atlanta's posh Buckhead neighborhood, he shot and killed federal agent David Wilhelm at a house the agent was renovating. Death penalty experts said the Nichols verdict shows there's no telling what will happen when a jury is asked to settle a capital case. This article appeared on page **A - 6** of the San Francisco Chronicle

Atlanta Courthouse Shooter Gets Lifetimes In Prison Judge Hands Down Multiple Life Terms

<http://www.wsbtv.com/news/18271842/detail.html?rss=atl&psp=nationalnews>

Saturday, December 13, 2008 – updated: 3:33 pm EST December 13, 2008

ATLANTA -- The shooter in a brazen attack at Atlanta's courthouse will likely die in prison. A jury couldn't agree on a death sentence in the case of Brian Nichols, a rape suspect who killed a judge, a deputy and two other people during and after his 2005 escape from custody.

It was then up to the judge to step in. He handed down the maximum consecutive sentences on the murder charges and dozens of other counts -- amounting to hundreds of years. He told Nichols if "there was any more I could give you, I would."

The judge also offered advice for the guards who will be handling Nichols. He told them, "Do not trust Mr. Nichols ever again. Ever again."

Officer killed, police chief critically injured in bank explosion

WOODBURN, Ore. - A Woodburn police officer was killed in an explosion at a bank Friday evening that also seriously injured the city's police chief and an Oregon State Police bomb technician. A bank employee ended up with minor injuries as well. 12/13/2008

<http://www.katu.com/news/local/36087684.html>

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Law enforcement officials announced the fatality late Friday night, several hours after an explosion rocked a West Coast bank branch located in the 2500 block of Newberg Highway (Highway 214). Earlier in the evening, only injuries had been reported. The only victim who has been identified is Chief of Police Scott Russell, who has been with the Woodburn Police Department since 1988. He was critically injured and is being treated at Oregon Health & Science University in Portland.

According to the Oregon State Police, Woodburn police, with the assistance of the FBI and an Oregon State Police Bomb Technician, were investigating a suspicious device at the bank when it detonated. Earlier in the day, law enforcement officials had responded to a report of a threatening call at a Wells Fargo bank branch next door. Bank employees were evacuated from the building and a suspicious package was found.

The bank president said the package was brought inside of the West Coast Bank at some point. It was unclear why the device was moved from one bank to another. Technicians apparently scanned the bomb and found nothing but then it went off. "And I just heard that boom and got up and went running outside," said Bob Currie, who lives nearby.

A description of the device has not been released. Police did not believe there were any other devices but they planned to keep the area cordoned off to be safe. "We're just trying to be as safe as we can with the scene to let our investigators do the best job they can do," said Sheriff Russ Isham with the Marion County Sheriff's Office.

Officer, bomb expert killed in blast ID'd



Officials are seen Saturday outside the West Coast Bank in Woodburn, Ore., where a bomb blast killed a local police officer and a state bomb disposal technician.

WOODBURN, Ore. (AP) — A bomb blast at a Woodburn-area bank killed a local police officer and a state bomb disposal technician. Police said Saturday they had no suspects and didn't know the motive. "That person is dangerous and needs to be found as soon as possible," said Lt. Gregg Hastings, spokesman for the Oregon State Police.

The explosion occurred late Friday afternoon after police arrived at the West Coast Bank branch office to check a suspicious device. Late Friday, police said a Woodburn police officer died from the explosion. On Saturday, the State Police said one of their bomb technicians had also died at the scene.

The dead were identified as Senior Trooper William Hakim and Woodburn police Capt. Tom Tennant, both 51. Woodburn Police Chief Scott Russell, 46, was injured and in critical condition at a Portland hospital in intensive care Saturday afternoon.

State police say the inside of the bank was extensively damaged, and a female employee was treated at Salem Hospital and released. Another bank employee was uninjured. Hastings declined to describe the bomb in detail but indicated it was powerful. A bank employee found the bomb in bushes outside the bank, and officers took it inside, when it exploded.

There was no explanation Saturday for their action. "That we don't know," Hastings said when asked why the bomb had been taken inside.

On Saturday, police opened up a large area around the bank that had been sealed, and allowed traffic to move freely on a state highway, Oregon 214, near the bank office. Earlier, they had said there was no evidence of more bombs.



State Police Senior Trooper William ("Bill") Hakim

A spokesman said there were close to 75 investigators at one point, from local, state and two federal agencies, the FBI and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. Detectives were still in the bank building on Saturday.

The federal agencies were acting as advisers and hadn't taken control of the case, said Marion County Undersheriff Jason Myers. "At this point, it's still a local-level investigation," he said.

The explosion at 5:24 p.m. Friday followed a bomb threat call to a nearby Wells Fargo branch bank. The State Police said Saturday that investigators found "a suspicious object" that turned out to be harmless.

But the police said their investigation "led next door to the West Coast Bank," where the bomb was found. Hastings said he didn't know of any grudges against the West Coast Bank. Bank President and CEO Robert Szniewajs said he, too, didn't know of a grudge or other motive. "We're not aware of anything," he said.

He said the bank manager found the device Friday in a survey of the bank's grounds undertaken after an employee got a call about the Wells Fargo incident and law enforcement officers had made a check.

Joe Langley, who pumps gas at a Union 76 station a few blocks away, said the blast sounded like thunder, and the crime is a "total mystery." "It's just a small bank with nice people working there," he said Saturday. "I don't know why anybody would do this."

Woodburn is in the Willamette Valley, about halfway between the capital, Salem, and Portland. It has a population of about 21,000 and is home to many blue-collar and agricultural workers in the region's extensive nursery crops business. The two bank buildings are near each other in a commercial strip through the center of town.

The state police say Hakim, on the force 11 years, was the 28th trooper to die in the line of duty, and the second detective in the Arson and Explosives Section. The first was in 1997, Sgt. Richard Schuening, the police said.

The police said he is survived by a wife, a 16-year old son and 18-year old daughter.

Tennant was a 28-year veteran of the Woodburn force, the police said, with a wife and children ages 24, 22 and 17.

Federal authorities said Saturday they were offering a \$35,000 reward for information leading to an arrest and conviction in the case.

Gov. Ted Kulongoski issued a statement saying, "Oregon lost two brave and honorable men last night, and another was critically injured, in a tragedy that will forever be remembered in our state's history."

Oregon State Police released the following information regarding the backgrounds of the three officers involved in the incident:

Senior Trooper William "Bill" HakimHakim, 51, was hired by the Oregon State Police on July 1, 1997, and stationed at the Klamath Falls Area Command office in the Patrol Services Division. On March 1, 1999, he transferred to the Salem Area Command office as a detective in the Arson and Explosives Section. He has also been involved with the Oregon State Police SWAT team and has taught other law enforcement officers about arson and bomb investigations.



Chief Scott Russell

Capt. Tom Tennant

Hakim is married and has a 16-year old son and an 18-year old daughter.

Twenty-eight Oregon State Police troopers have died in the line of duty. The last on duty death occurred September 4, 2001.

Hakim is the second Oregon State Police Arson & Explosives Section detective to die in the line of duty. The first was Sgt. Richard Schuening on October 2, 1997.

Information regarding all Oregon State Police troopers lost in the line of duty is found here: <http://www.oregon.gov/OSP/Memorial.shtml>

Captain Tom Tennant

Tennant, 51, was hired with the Woodburn Police Department on Sept. 8, 1980, as a police officer. He was promoted to the rank of Captain on Nov. 1, 2004. Tennant served as the administrative captain, overseeing both the Investigation and Records Divisions. Tennant has served as a police officer, patrol sergeant and detective sergeant. He is a graduate of the FBI National Academy.

Tennant is survived by his wife as well as two daughters and a son who are ages 24, 22 and 17.

Chief Scott Russell

Russell, 46, was hired with the Woodburn Police Department on Aug. 22, 1988, as a police officer. He has served as a patrol officer, detective, patrol sergeant and deputy chief. Russell is a graduate of the FBI National Academy and is active in the Oregon Association of Chiefs of Police. Russell is married and has two daughters, ages 12 and 10.

Md. Will Not Indict Officer in Car Crash - Dead Student's Family Shocked By Aaron C. Davis, Washington Post Staff Writer Saturday, December 13, 2008; Page B01

After a night out drinking, Prince George's County police officer Mario Chavez was traveling at twice the speed limit last December when his cruiser struck a car that had turned left across his lane. The driver of that car, a 20-year-old University of Maryland student, was killed while his mother watched. Now, after a year of investigation, county prosecutors say they have determined the penalty the officer will face: a speeding ticket.

The decision this week, on the anniversary of Brian Gray's death, has shocked his friends and family. They say evidence uncovered in a civil case against Chavez has left them feeling that the officer was treated leniently. "A speeding ticket is an insult to the value of my son's life," Mary Gray said. "If they were looking for things for an indictment, they weren't looking very hard. This feels like it's being swept under the rug -- a coverup."

Mary Gray, who was behind her son in another car when the accident occurred, is frustrated that her son's blood alcohol level was checked -- it was zero -- but Chavez's was not. In a deposition for the civil case, the officer acknowledged drinking "three, four" beers the night before and said he had slept on a friend's couch. Records also showed a half-hour call from Chavez's phone to his wife's phone during the time he indicated under oath that he had been asleep, she said.

State's Attorney Glenn F. Ivey offered little defense of the speeding ticket, saying he agrees with Gray's family that the penalty doesn't fit the crime. "They're right, they're absolutely right," he said yesterday.

Ivey said his office dedicated a lot of time to investigating Gray's death but ultimately found insufficient evidence that Chavez acted with gross negligence, a threshold that is met only when a driver knowingly engages in a combination of illegal activities, such as driving under the influence and driving erratically. Such negligence is required to successfully prosecute vehicular manslaughter.

"We have a lot of fatality cases where tickets are the only option for us," Ivey said. "I think it's wrong, and I think the law needs to change." Ivey said he is working for a fourth consecutive year with state legislators to draft a bill that would allow prosecutors a "middle ground" to more easily prosecute drivers who cause substantial injury or death.

The prosecutor also said his recent failure to win a conviction of Scott Campbell, a county police officer who was charged with manslaughter in an eight-car pileup last year on the Beltway, factored into his decision not to present the Chavez case to a grand jury.

Chavez, who is working as a patrol officer in southern Prince George's, could not be reached for comment yesterday. His county-provided attorney, Shelley Johnson, did not return messages seeking comment. An investigation by county police concluded in June that Chavez, 31, and Gray shared responsibility for the accident.

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Mary Gray said she was summoned to Ivey's office Tuesday, the day before the anniversary of Brian Gray's death, to hear the news about Chavez's speeding ticket. It was written for 50 mph, or twice the posted speed limit on the Bowie road where her son made a left turn in front of the officer.

Gray said she is also troubled that potential evidence has never been analyzed. A black box recording device for the cruiser still sits in Detroit, where Ivey's office says software problems have prevented technicians from retrieving the record of Chavez's actions before the crash.

Maj. Andy Ellis, a county police spokesman, said officers who responded to the Dec. 10, 2007, crash followed state law in not testing Chavez's sobriety. Officers at the scene reported seeing no reason to think Chavez had been drinking. He said the police department will begin an internal investigation.

Gray said her lawyer has found that a page of nurse's notes about Chavez's condition when he arrived at Prince George's Hospital after the crash is missing. An attorney not on the case, Terrell N. Roberts III of Riverdale, said that if Chavez had been asked whether he had been drinking and answered truthfully, a field sobriety test would have been given.

"If he had just been given a blood test, it would be different," Gray said. "It would have been some closure for me to know it was just an accident." Staff writer Ruben Castaneda contributed to this report.

Family of North Miami Beach police officer killed in crash is awarded \$8 million

By BY JOSE PAGLIERY Miami Herald Staff Writer - Wednesday, December 10, 2008

http://www.palmbeachpost.com/news/content/local_news/epaper/2008/12/10/1210broward.html?cxtype=rss&cxsvc=7&cxcat=76

Four years after a highly decorated North Miami Beach police officer was killed in a car crash, his wife and three daughters were awarded \$8.07 million by a Broward County jury. Yvette Lorenzo and her three daughters were not in the car with the father, Officer Orestes "Oreo" Lorenzo, when he swerved out of the way while driving west on Pines Boulevard in Pembroke Pines to avoid hitting a red Honda Civic that ran a stop sign. Lorenzo's car went straight into a drainage curb, tripping his vehicle and smashing it against a large royal palm tree. The father of three was ejected from the car. He died in the hospital seven days later.

It was July 2, 2004, when Natasha Russo, 18, drove her father's new car past the stop sign on 180th Avenue. The jury awarded the compensatory damages - against the Florida Department of Transportation and William and Natasha Russo - at midnight Saturday. The trial was closed to the public because of the flooding that closed the courthouse last week. The lawsuit maintained that the 18-year-old's negligence led to Lorenzo's death.

It also alleged that the FDOT was responsible as well for violating its own rules by allowing a drainage curb and large royal palm trees to be placed on a road where the speed limit was 50 mph. According to court documents, the jury estimated the damage to Lorenzo's family that was caused by the crash at \$11.5 million. But after distributing the blame placed on Russo, the FDOT, and Lorenzo himself, the family of four was given 70 percent of the total monetary damages.

The jury concluded that Lorenzo was 30 percent responsible for his own death. More than half of the blame, 55 percent, was placed on the young Russo. The jury decided the FDOT was the least responsible of the three, and 15 percent of the crash was attributed to the department.

http://yorkdispatch.inyork.com/yd/local/ci_11185771?source=rss Police log: York man charged in crash that killed police officer
CARL LINDQUIST and BROCK PARKER -- The York Dispatch - Updated: 12/10/2008 11:04:34 PM EST

Police have charged a York man with homicide by vehicle after he allegedly struck and killed an Adams County police officer who was riding a police motorcycle in a parade. An accident reconstruction showed that Earl Matthew Wright, 34, of 553 W. Clarke Ave. in York City, was speeding when he lost control of his car Sept. 14 on Route 234 in Tyrone Township, Adams County, according to a news release from the Adams County District Attorney's Office.

Wright's vehicle traveled into the other lane and struck a police motorcycle driven by Michael Weigand, 25, who was on duty as a sergeant with the Latimore Township Police Department, according to the news release. Wright was charged Tuesday with homicide by vehicle, aggravated assault, reckless driving, duty of driver on approach of an emergency response area, driving on the right side of the roadway and driving a vehicle at an unsafe speed, according to Pennsylvania State Police, who investigated the crash.

"I think for all of us in the law enforcement community it feels good to make this step forward," said Trooper Karl Schmidhamer. "This is the first step in the process of bringing closure to this case." Reached at his home Wednesday, Wright declined comment. Weigand worked part time for Latimore Township Police and full time for the Eastern Regional Police Department.

Escorting parade: On the day of the crash, Weigand was operating a motorcycle with its emergency lights activated while traveling westbound on Route 234. He was at the rear of a parade of motorcycles escorting a charity ride to benefit a local park, according to charging documents and the news release.

Wright was driving eastbound on Route 234 in a 1989 Ford F-250 flatbed truck, and he told police he was following his wife, Sherri Wright, who was driving a pickup truck in front of his. Wright told police that he saw his wife slow down and he applied the brakes to his truck, but lost control. His brakes locked up and his truck began to slide, traveled across the road and the passenger side of his truck hit the front of Weigand's motorcycle, according to charging documents.

Weigand was thrown from the motorcycle and pronounced dead at the scene. The engine of his motorcycle caught on fire after the collision, according to charging documents. A police reconstruction of the accident showed that Wright was traveling 64-66 mph in a 45-mph zone when he lost control of his vehicle, according to the release.

Wright faces a maximum sentence of 27 years in prison and fines of up to \$40,000 if convicted of the aggravated assault and homicide by vehicle charges, the District Attorney's office stated. Charges were filed Monday, and Wright turned himself in Tuesday night, Schmidhamer said. He was released on \$25,000 unsecured bail. A preliminary hearing is scheduled for Dec. 17 before Adams County District Judge Thomas Carr.

Reach Carl Lindquist at 505-5432 or clindquist@yorkdispatch.com. Reach Brock Parker at 505-5434 or bparker@yorkdispatch.com.

