

Life sentence urged in peanut salmonella case

By **RUSS BYNUM**
Associated Press

SAVANNAH, Ga. — Federal court officers have recommended a sentence of life in prison for a peanut company executive convicted of selling salmonella-tainted food, a move that attorneys on both sides called “unprecedented” for a food-poisoning case.

The potential life sentence for former Peanut Corporation of America owner Stewart Parnell was disclosed by prosecutors in a court filing Wednesday.

Parnell, 61, is scheduled to be sentenced Sept. 21 by a federal judge in Albany, Georgia. Prosecutors filed a legal brief Wednesday in U.S. District Court revealing that the U.S. Probation Office, which prepares pre-sentencing reports to help guide federal judges, concluded the scope of Parnell’s crimes “results in a life sentence Guidelines range.”

Parnell’s defense attorneys confirmed the recommendation Thursday to The Associated Press, calling the possible punishment “unprecedented.” Bill Marler, a lawyer for victims sickened by peanut butter from Parnell’s southwest Georgia plant, used the same word.

In fact, Marler and other experts say the trial of Parnell and two co-defendants last year was the first federal food-poisoning case to be tried by an American court. A jury convicted Parnell of 71 counts including conspiracy, obstruction of justice, wire fraud and other crimes related to a salmonella outbreak in 2008 and 2009. The Centers for Disease Control linked the outbreak to nine deaths and 714 illnesses. It prompted one of the largest food recalls in U.S. history.

Justin Lugar, one of Parnell’s defense attorneys, confirmed Thursday that the recommendation before Judge W. Louis Sands is for life in prison, with no lesser range. Parnell’s lawyers are trying to persuade the judge to disregard numbers used as aggravating factors to boost the suggested sentence to its maximum: an estimate that Parnell’s customers suffered \$144 million in losses as well as health officials’ tally that 714 people got sick.

Parnell’s attorneys say the cost estimate was “based on speculative, incomplete, and untrustworthy information”

compiled by investigators and that none of Parnell’s customers were asked to testify about the losses in court. Parnell’s lawyers similarly questioned the reliability of the CDC’s tally of how many people got sick, noting that no medical doctors were called to testify and only one victim took the stand.

“That recommendation is truly absurd,” said Ken Hodges, an attorney on Parnell’s defense team. “We hope the judge will see that Stewart Parnell never meant to hurt anyone. He ate the peanut butter himself. He fed it to his children and to his grandchildren.”

In their court filing, prosecutors stood by their numbers for victims injured and financial losses — and insisted they possibly understate the impact.

“Life in prison, especially in a food case, it’s frankly unprecedented,” said Marler, who has represented victims of food-borne illnesses for two decades. “But the case itself, on a factual basis, is unprecedented.”

Marler said he suspects the judge and prosecutors will think carefully before deciding to pursue a life sentence for Parnell. Still, he said, even the possibility of such a stiff sentence sends a message to food companies.

“The same shock or sobering impact that you and I have talking about it, you multiply that by 100 for some food executive sitting in an office,” Marler said.

Even if objections raised by Parnell’s attorneys to the sentencing recommendation are denied, it’s still possible the judge could impose a lighter sentence. Federal judges are required to consider recommendations based on complex sentencing guidelines, but they are not bound by them.

Parnell and his co-defendants were never charged with sickening or killing anybody. Instead prosecutors used the seven-week trial to lay out a paper trail of emails, lab results and billing records to show Parnell’s company defrauded customers by using falsified test results to cover up lab screenings that showed batches of peanut butter contained salmonella. The tainted goods were shipped to Kellogg’s and other food processors for use in products from snack crackers to pet food.

NATION/WORLD

3 dead, including gunman, in movie theater shooting

By **MICHAEL KUNZELMAN**
Associated Press

LAFAYETTE, La. — A gunman opened fire at a movie theater in Louisiana on Thursday evening, killing two people and injuring at least seven others before fatally shooting himself, officials said.

The gunman, a 58-year-old “lone white male,” fired his weapon “numerous times” before shooting himself at the Grand Theatre in Lafayette, city Police Chief Jim Craft told a news conference.

Craft said police know the gunman’s identity but are not releasing it. He said the shooter’s body was still inside the theater and that a coroner was on the scene.

Craft said injuries ranged from non-life-threatening to critical.

There were about 100 people in the theater at the time of the shooting, Col. Mike Edmonson of the Louisiana State Police told a news conference. He added that police believe the gunman fired shots only at the theater and had not waged an attack anywhere else beforehand.

“We have no reason to believe that this individual acted beyond this location here,” Edmonson said.

The shooting happened about 20 minutes into a 7 p.m. showing of the movie “Trainwreck.” The Louisiana Advertiser quoted theatergoer Katie Domingue as saying.

“We heard a loud pop we



Leslie Westbrook/The Advocate via AP

Law enforcement and other emergency personnel respond to the scene of a deadly shooting at the Grand Theatre on Thursday in Lafayette, La.

thought was a firecracker,” Domingue told the newspaper. Domingue said she saw “an older white man” standing up and shooting down into the theater, but not in her direction.

“He wasn’t saying anything. I didn’t hear anybody screaming either,” Domingue said.

Domingue told the newspaper she heard about six shots before she and her fiancé ran to the nearest exit, leaving behind her shoes and purse.

One of the stars of the movie, actress Amy Schumer sent a tweet: “My heart is broken and all my thoughts and prayers are with everyone in Louisiana.” Gov. Bobby Jindal, who

was also at the scene, called the shooting “an awful night for Louisiana.”

“What we can do now is we can pray,” Jindal said. “We can hug these families. We can shower them with love, thoughts and prayers.”

Jindal said he would meet with the families of the victims.

Lafayette is about 60 miles west of Baton Rouge. Outside the movie theater complex hours after the shooting, a couple of dozen police cars were still at the scene, which authorities had cordoned off with police tape as onlookers took photos with their cellphones.

A small group of movie theater employees stood outside the police perim-

eter. A man who identified himself as a general manager at the theater declined to be interviewed: “We would appreciate it if you could give us some space,” he said.

The Louisiana shooting occurred three years after James Holmes entered a crowded movie theater in suburban Denver and opened fire during the premier of a Batman film, killing 12 people and injuring 70 others.

A jury last week quickly convicted Holmes on 165 counts of murder, attempted murder and other charges, rejecting defense arguments that he was insane and suffering delusions that drove him to the July 20, 2012, attack.

FAITH BRIEFLY

Guest pastor at Pendleton Faith Center

PENDLETON — Pastor Ted Davis, the North Pacific divisional supervisor from La Grande Faith Center, will be the guest speaker at Pendleton Faith Center on Sunday for the 10 a.m. worship service.

His sermon is titled “The Power of the Blood of Jesus,” from Isaiah 53:4-6. He also will tell the story of God’s healing touch on his body and soul.

The Pendleton Faith Center, a foursquare church, is at 108 S. Main St, Pendleton.

Teen ringers to perform concert

PENDLETON — The Wesley Bell Ringers are bringing their 50th annual concert tour to Pendleton. The concert is Friday, July 31 at 7:30 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church, 201 S.W. Dorion Ave.

The Wesley Bell Ringers feature 27 teenage ringers playing more than 225 handbells and handchimes. The group is part of the music ministry of Christ United Methodist Church of Salt Lake City, which began with 9 youth ringers and 25 bells in 1963.

The 2015 concert includes the music of Bach,

Andrew Lloyd Webber’s “Phantom of the Opera” and Disney’s “The Little Mermaid,” as well as music of many of the finest arrangers and composers in the world of handbells.

Admission to the concert is free, but a free will offering will be collected. For more information, contact the church at 541-276-7681 or visit www.wesleybells.org

Pendleton SDA offers VBS

PENDLETON — Everest Vacation Bible School, Conquering Challenges with God’s Mighty Power, is welcoming children ages 5-10 on July 27-31 from 6-8 p.m. at the Pendleton Seventh-day Adventist Church, 1401 S.W. Goodwin Place, Pendleton.

Pre-registration is available at <https://www.groupvbspro.com/vbs/ez/> PendletonSDA; walk-in registration is also available. Call Dana at 541-276-0882 for more information.

Submit information to: community@eastoregonian.com or drop off to the attention of Tammy Malgesini at 333 E. Main St., Hermiston or Renee Struthers at 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton. Call 541-564-4539 or 541-966-0818 with questions.

CHURCH DIRECTORY

Worship with us!

Adams Community Church <i>Duane Geyer, Pastor</i> 140 N. Main, Adams, OR 566-9457 <u>Worship</u> 9 am	GRACE AND MERCY LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA OPEN HEARTS – OPEN DOOR www.graceandmercyatlutheran.org Sunday Worship 9:00 a.m. Sunday School 10:00 a.m. (Nursery Provided) Fellowship, Refreshments & Sunday School Check Out our Facebook Page or Website for More Information 541-289-4535 Tom Inch, Pastor Grace and Mercy Lutheran Church, ELCA 164 E. Main St. / P.O. Box 1108 Hermiston, Oregon 97838	St. Johns Episcopal Church All People Are Welcome <i>Scripture, Tradition and Reason</i> Family service 9am Sunday Gladys Ave & 7th Hermiston Fr. Dan Lediard, Priest. PH: 567-4672	Redeemer Episcopal Church 241 SE Second St. Pendleton (541)276-3809 www.pendletonepiscopal.org Sunday Morning Worship 9:00 a.m. Wednesday Worship Noon Wednesday Evening Prayer and Pot Luck 6:00 p.m. All Are Welcome
Grace Baptist Church 555 SW 11th, Hermiston 567-9497 <i>Nursery provided for all services</i> Sunday School - 9:30 AM Worship - 10:45 AM 6:00 pm Wed Prayer & Worship - 7:00 PM “Proclaiming God’s word, growing in God’s grace”	PENDLETON FIRST CHURCH OF GOD FIRST SERVICE 8:30 AM SECOND SERVICE 10:30 AM 712 SW 27 th ST. 541-276-1894 www.fcogpendleton.com	FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH -Presbyterian Church (USA)- 201 SW Dorion Ave. Pendleton Service of Worship - 10:00 am Children’s Sunday School - 10:20 am Fellowship - 11:00 am www.pendletonpresbyterian.com Open Hearted...Open Minded	<i>Come meet Jesus at</i> PENDLETON BAPTIST CHURCH 3202 S.W. Nye Avenue, Pendleton, OR 541-276-7590 Sunday Morning Worship 8:30 & 11:00 AM Sunday Bible Classes 9:45 AM Sunday Youth Group 6:00 PM Awana Kids Club Tuesdays 6:30 - 8:00 PM K - 6th Grade (Sept-May)
FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH <i>in Mission for Christ LCMC</i> Bible Study.....9:00 AM Sunday Worship.....10:30 AM Red Lion Hotel (Oregon Trail Room) www.faithpendleton.org	Living Word Christian Center Sunday Worship Service 10:00 AM Wednesday Bible Study 7:00 PM Sharon Miller, Pastor 401 Northgate • Pendleton 278-8082 www.livingwordcc.com	The Salvation Army <i>Center for Worship & Service</i> Sunday Worship Service 9:30 - Sunday School 10:30 - Worship Service Wednesday Bible Study 5:30 Family Fellowship Meal 6:00 Bible Study COME AS YOU ARE 150 SE EMIGRANT (541)276-3369	Peace Lutheran Church <i>ELCA</i> 210 NW 9th, Pendleton Join us Sundays 9:30 am Sunday Worship 10:30 am Fellowship 11:00 am Sunday School & Adult Class ~Come and be at Peace~ on 1290 KUMA noon each Sunday
Community Presbyterian Church 14 Martin Drive, Umatilla, OR 922-3250 Worship: 10 AM Sunday School at 11:30	Faith Center Church Worshipping God • Loving People 108 S. Main • 276-9569 Summer Sunday Worship 10:00 am Wed. 7:00 pm Praise, Prophecy & Prayer Sr. Pastor, Ray O’Grady pendletonfaithcenter.org	FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST) 215 N Main • Pendleton Summer Worship begins at 9:40am (541) 443-2500 prbconline.blogspot.com Sunday School: 9:30 am Worship Service: 10:45 am Wednesday Services: Kids’ Club: 6:00 pm Youth Group: 7:00 pm	New Hope Community Church <i>Ministries for the entire family</i> 1350 S Hwy 39S, Hermiston Sunday Worship Services: 9 a.m. & 10:45 a.m. Classes for kids during both! Call 567-8441 Servicios en Español
<i>a place to belong</i> Pendleton First INVITING ENRICHING INVOLVING EMPOWERING SUNDAY SERVICES AM Celebration-10:00am AM Kids Place -10:00am The Connection--6:00pm Groups for all ages: Adults, Children, Youth, & College Thursdays Celebrate Recovery-6:00pm Celebration Place-6:00pm Other Groups Available Weekly For more info visit WWW.PENDLETONFIRST.COM 1911 SE Court Ave 541-276-6417 Assembly of God Church	First United Methodist Church 352 SE 2nd St., Pendleton, OR Office 276-2616 New Pastor Dr. Jim Pierce Worship Service 9:00 AM Fellowship 10:15 AM Broadcast KUMA 11:00 AM Childcare Available Choir practice Sundays 8:30 AM	To share your worship times call Amanda Jacobs 541-278-2683	