

Key Malheur refuge occupier pleads guilty; Bundys stay in jail

STEVEN DUBOIS
Associated Press

PORTLAND — A military veteran accused of taking leadership roles in two armed standoffs involving federal authorities pleaded guilty Tuesday in Oregon to a conspiracy charge and is expected to do the same involving charges in Nevada, prosecutors said.

Meanwhile, a federal judge decided to keep brothers Ammon and Ryan Bundy behind bars as they await their September trial in Portland on conspiracy charges.

The brothers have been accused of leading the standoffs at a wildlife refuge in Oregon and their family ranch in Nevada.

At the federal courthouse in Portland, Ryan Payne of Anaconda, Montana, acknowledged that he conspired with others to prevent Interior Department employees from doing their jobs this winter during the occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge.

In a plea deal that included talks with prosecutors in Nevada, the U.S. attorney's office in Oregon recommended that Payne's likely 3½-year prison sentence run at the same time as the punishment he could receive for his role in a 2014 standoff with federal agents at a Nevada ranch owned by Cliven Bundy, Assistant U.S. Attorney Craig Gabriel said.

In Nevada, the deal calls for Payne to plead guilty to three charges, with one involving the brandishing of a firearm that carries a mandatory minimum sentence of seven years, Gabriel said.

Nevada prosecutors plan to recommend 12 years in prison, and Payne's defense will push for less, Gabriel said.

Payne, 32, told U.S. District Court Judge Anna J. Brown in Portland that his first adult decision was joining the military, where he took an oath to uphold



Les Zaitz/The Oregonian via AP

Ryan Payne, an Army veteran from Montana, participates in a community meeting in Burns Jan. 1. He was among key militiamen who seized control of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge and pleaded guilty to conspiracy charges Tuesday in Portland.

the Constitution.

Payne said he came to Oregon last year to do that by defending two ranchers he believes were wrongly imprisoned for setting fires.

He and others, including Ammon and Ryan Bundy, occupied the refuge from Jan. 2 until their arrests nearly a month later. A few holdouts continued the armed protest until Feb. 11.

"In pursuing that effort, I have come to understand that folks who work for the government perceived my actions as intimidating and threatening," Payne said in court.

Payne was arrested during a traffic stop while traveling with Arizona rancher Robert "LaVoy" Finicum and others to a community meeting off the refuge.

Payne complied with officers and left the vehicle. Finicum and the others drove away, and Finicum was fatally shot by authorities at a roadblock.

Gabriel said Payne, the eighth man to plead guilty in the Oregon case, took a leadership role in the occupation, coordinating armed guards and providing tactical training.

He is scheduled to be sentenced Nov. 18 but that date could get pushed back based on developments in

Nevada, where authorities say Payne recruited gunmen and led an armed assault on federal officers who attempted to round-up the Bundys' cattle near Bunkerville.

Ammon and Ryan Bundy are also charged in that case, and would have likely been sent to a Nevada jail if U.S. District Court Judge Robert Jones had not decided Tuesday to keep them in custody at a downtown Portland jail.

Jones previously granted pretrial release to many of the men and women indicted on conspiracy charges in the case. But in a written opinion, Jones said the Bundys are not good candidates for release because the confrontations show they believe they are justified in refusing federal orders and might not appear for trial Sept. 7.

"More dangerously, they may attempt to recruit another standoff or occupations," he wrote.

The judge also cited what jailhouse deputies described as an effort by Ryan Bundy to escape. A search of his cell on April 8 yielded a rope made with multiple sheets tied together, authorities said.

"I reject his excuse that he was practicing braiding," Jones wrote.

Trump triumphs as GOP nominee, completing stunning climb to top

CLEVELAND (AP) — Cementing an extraordinary political takeover, Republicans nominated Donald Trump Tuesday night as their presidential standard-bearer, hitching their hopes of keeping Democrat Hillary Clinton out of the White House on an unorthodox candidate who has sown divisions within the party and across the nation.

While it was Trump's night, Clinton was frequently the focus.

New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie energized the crowd with a full-throated takedown of Clinton, imploring delegates to shout "Guilty!" as he ticked through numerous accusations of wrongdoing.

Trump addressed the convention briefly in videotaped remarks, thanking them for formally nominating him as the party's White House candidate.

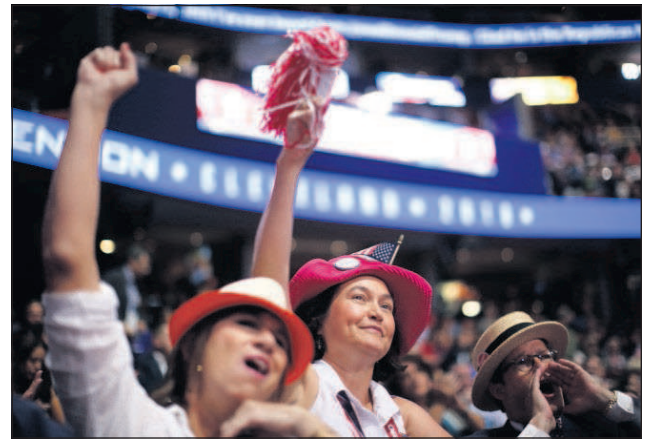
"This is a movement, but we have to go all the way," he said.

For Trump, the celebrations were a much-needed opportunity to regroup after a chaotic convention kickoff that included a plagiarism charge involving wife Melania Trump's address on opening night.

There were no big missteps Tuesday, but the event was void of the glitzy, Hollywood touch Trump promised, with a series of Republican officials parading on stage to level sharp, but repetitive, criticisms of Clinton.

The evening's program ended on an unusual note, with an actress-turned-avocado farmer delivering the closing speech — a spot normally reserved for prominent speakers.

Trump's family again took center stage, underscoring the campaign's urgent task to reshape the image of a candidate seen by large swaths of voters as harsh and divisive. Two of Trump's children testified to his character, casting him as a man undeterred by



AP Photo/Matt Rourke

Ann-Marie Villicana from Pasadena, Calif., cheers during the second day session of the Republican National Convention in Cleveland, Tuesday.

challenges.

"For my father, impossible is just the starting point," said Donald Trump Jr., the oldest of the Republican nominee's five children. Questions about plagiarism surfaced for a second day in a row, this time in the eldest son's speech. But F.H. Buckley, the writer behind the original work in question this time — an article in The American Conservative — said he was a principal speechwriter for the younger Trump and said the campaign did nothing wrong.

For some Republicans, the night also offered a glimpse of what could have been. House Speaker Paul Ryan, who resisted calls to jump into the presidential race, made a vigorous call for party unity — though his message focused more on the risks of letting Democrats keep the White House and make gains in Congress than a rationale for Trump.

"Let's compete in every part of America, and turn out at the polls like every last vote matters, because it will," Ryan said.

Many Republican leaders stayed away from the convention, still wary of being associated with the divisive candidate and unsure how his nomination impacts their own political futures.

The crowd gathered in the cavernous convention hall reflected the growing

dissatisfaction among some Republicans with party elites. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, who has been a lukewarm supporter of Trump, was greeted with a smattering of boos as he took the stage.

It was one of the occasional flurries of dissent on the convention floor, including jeers as states that Trump did not win recorded their votes during the nominating roll call vote. Still, Trump far outdistanced his primary rivals, and his vice presidential pick, Indiana Gov. Mike Pence, was also formally nominated.

Trump was put over the top by his home state of New York. Four of his children joined the state's delegation on the convention floor for the historic moment and appeared overwhelmed with emotion.

Wife Melania Trump was praised for making progress in highlighting her husband's personal qualities during her Monday night address. She spoke of his "simple goodness" and his loyalty and love of family — while noting the "drama" that comes with Trump in politics.

But her speech was quickly overtaken by charges that it included two passages — each 30 words or longer — that matched a 2008 Democratic convention address by Michelle Obama nearly word-for-word.

BRIEFLY

Turkey fires tens of thousands in coup plotters hunt

ISTANBUL (AP) — Asserting that "all the evidence" points to a U.S.-based Muslim cleric as the mastermind of last week's failed coup, Turkey's government on Tuesday fired tens of thousands of teachers, university deans and others accused of ties to the plot and demanded the cleric's extradition.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan raised the issue in a phone call with U.S. President Barack Obama, and his spokesman said the government was preparing a formal extradition request for the cleric, Fethullah Gulen. But he also suggested that the U.S. government shouldn't require the facts before extraditing him.

"A person of this kind can easily be extradited on grounds of suspicion," said the spokesman, Ibrahim Kalin. "And there is very strong suspicion for his involvement, for Gulen's involvement, in this coup attempt. So this is sufficient ground."

Later, White House spokesman Josh Earnest said that Turkey had submitted materials related to Gulen and the administration was reviewing whether they amounted to a formal extradition request. Earnest added that a decision on whether to extradite would be made under a treaty between the two countries — not by Obama.

The extradition demand is likely to strain U.S.-Turkey ties as the Obama administration refers the matter to the Justice Department, which will determine whether the Turkish government has established probable cause that a crime was committed.

Gulen has strongly denied the government's charges, suggesting that Friday's

attempted coup could have been staged as a pretext for the Erdogan government to seize even more power.

Feds remove the lesser prairie chicken from protection list

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) — Facing an uphill court fight, the U.S. government announced Tuesday it was formally removing the lesser prairie chicken from a federal protection list under the Endangered Species Act.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service said the move follows recent court rulings in Texas that stripped the lesser prairie chicken of federal protection. However, federal officials say the removal didn't mean authorities had concluded the lesser prairie chicken didn't warrant federal protection.

The previous rulings found that Fish and Wildlife failed to make a proper evaluation of a multistate conservation plan when it listed the lesser prairie chicken as threatened.

Oil and gas groups had strongly opposed the threatened listing. The Permian Basin Petroleum Association said it would impede operations and cost companies hundreds of millions of dollars in oil and gas development in one of the country's most prolific basins, the Permian Basin in the Texas Panhandle and eastern New Mexico.

Ranchers also opposed the listing.

The lesser prairie chicken's Great Plains habitat has shrunk by more than 80 percent since the 1800s, and its population by 99 percent. It lives primarily in Kansas, but also in Texas, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Colorado. About 95 percent of the bird's range is on private lands.

Named Top 10 Must See Rodeo! —Western Horse & Gun

71st ANNUAL

FEEL THE THUNDER!

Chief Joseph Days

RODEO

July 26-31, 2016

Four nights of PRCA rodeo plus six days of western entertainment in scenic Joseph, Oregon!

TUESDAY	1:30pm	Bucking Horse Stampede — Main Street
WEDNESDAY	9:00am 7:00pm 9:00pm	Little Buckaroo Rodeo for special needs children — Arena PRCA RODEO — Harley Tucker Memorial Arena Family Fun at the Thunder Room
THURSDAY	9:00am 2:00pm 7:00pm 9:00pm	Tough Enough to Wear Pink Walk Slack — Arena PRCA RODEO — Harley Tucker Memorial Arena Tough Enough to Wear Pink Barrel Racing Slack — After the Rodeo Music and Dancing at Thunder Room
FRIDAY	10:00am 2:00pm 7:00pm 9:00pm 9:00pm	Chief Joseph Junior Parade — Main Street Slack — Arena PRCA RODEO — Harley Tucker Memorial Arena All Teen Dance — Joseph Community Center Music and Dancing at Thunder Room
SATURDAY	6:00am 10:00am 12:00pm 2:30pm 3:00pm 7:00pm 9:00pm 9:00pm 11:00pm	Shrine Breakfast begins Grand Parade — Main Street Nez Perce Friendship Feast — Encampment Pavilion Slack — Arena Traditional Indian Dance Contest — Encampment Pavilion PRCA RODEO — Harley Tucker Memorial Arena All Teen Dance — Joseph Community Center Music and Dancing at Thunder Room Cowboy Breakfast — Rodeo Grounds — Until 3am
SUNDAY	6:00am 9:00am	Cowboy Breakfast Continues Cowboy Church Service — Harley Tucker Memorial Arena

To purchase tickets and for more info, visit www.chiefjosephdays.com