

Jury divided in first trial for Nevada standoff

LAS VEGAS (AP) — A federal jury in Las Vegas found two men guilty Monday in an armed standoff that stopped government agents from rounding up cattle near Cliven Bundy's Nevada ranch in 2014, but then deadlocked on federal charges against four others.

The six men were the first to be tried in the standoff, which was hailed as a victory by states' rights advocates who want vast stretches of federal land in the U.S. West put under local control.

Their case was seen as a preview for an upcoming trial for Bundy; his eldest sons, Ammon and Ryan Bundy; and two others who prosecutors have characterized as leaders of a conspiracy to defy the government with guns.

The judge declared a mistrial for Richard Lovelien, Scott Drexler, Eric Parker and Steven Stewart and scheduled a new trial for June 26, the same day the Bundys are set to be tried.

Earlier, the same jury convicted Gregory Burleson, 53, of Phoenix, of eight charges, including threatening and assaulting a federal officer. He faces a minimum of 57 years in prison at sentencing July 26.

Todd Engel, 49, of Boundary County, Idaho, was found guilty of obstruction and traveling across state lines in aid of extortion. Engel could face up to 30 years at sentencing July 27.

The Bundys have become symbols in the long-running fight over government-owned land. The sons also were accused of leading a 41-day armed occupation of a federal wildlife refuge in Oregon last year. They were acquitted of all charges but kept behind bars to face trial in the earlier standoff near their father's ranch.

Jurors in Las Vegas deliberated for six days and indicated last week they were having trouble reaching verdicts



People including Carol Bundy, top center, wife of Nevada rancher Cliven Bundy, embrace after a partial verdict outside of the federal courthouse, Monday in Las Vegas.

on charges of conspiracy. No one was convicted of conspiracy, mirroring the Oregon case.

About 30 supporters gathered outside court, where Cliven Bundy's wife, Carol, said before the mistrial was declared that the jury saw weakness in the government's case.

"If they can't decide, there's doubt. If there's doubt, there's innocence," she said.

The six defendants answered a Bundy family call-to-arms three years ago in Bunkerville, Nevada, making them co-conspirators in a plan to commit a federal offense and impede or injure federal officers, prosecutors said.

Prosecutors also characterized them as the least culpable of the 17 to be tried in the case.

Jurors heard testimony and saw

photos of each defendant with an assault-style rifle during the tense standoff where more than 100 protesters shouted for heavily armed federal agents to release nearly 400 cows.

The government was enforcing court orders to get Bundy cattle off public lands for his refusal to pay grazing fees.

No shots were fired. But it is illegal to brandish assault-style weapons against federal agents, Acting Nevada U.S. Attorney Steven Myhre said.

The defendants argued they came to Nevada to exercise constitutional rights of free speech and weapon possession after seeing accounts of Bundy family members met with police dogs, knocked down, stun-gunned and arrested in earlier scuffles with federal agents.

A third trial for six others charged in the standoff is expected in the fall.

BRIEFLY

Millions of spoiled onions disposed of in Oregon, Idaho

NYSSA (AP) — An estimated 100 million pounds of spoiled onions have been disposed of in Idaho and Oregon following a winter of unprecedented snowfall.

The Capital Press reported Sunday that both states extended the onion disposal deadline a month to April 15 in response to the number of onions.

Oregon officials gave a landfill permission to build an additional trench to handle the onions.

A state department of agriculture official said being able to dispose of all the onions was a "minor miracle." The onions are believed to be spoiled due to sheds collapsing under the weight of large amounts of snow and ice.

Prominent tax protester convicted of federal charges

PORTLAND (AP) — A prominent tax protester has been convicted of issuing fake financial documents to banks and the U.S. Treasury, and failing to file tax returns.

The Oregonian/OregonLive reports Winton ShROUT declined comment after Friday's verdict at the federal courthouse in Portland.

Government lawyers said ShROUT tried to cheat banks and the government while preaching illegal schemes in paid seminars across the country.

They said he sent homemade International Bills of Exchange to a small bank, each purporting to be legal tender for a trillion dollars.

The 69-year-old who moved to suburban Portland from Utah testified he was given authority to make the financial documents from the Office of International Treasury Control. ShROUT also testified that he hadn't paid taxes in 20 years.

Suspect in assault of girl had been deported

PORTLAND (AP) — Authorities say a suspect in the sexual assault of a girl in Portland was deported to Mexico 16 years ago, and they are asking the public to help locate him.

Santiago Martinez-Flores, 48, has a criminal record dating back to 1994. The Clackamas County Sheriff's Office said Monday he was deported to Mexico in 2001 after being imprisoned in Oregon for about two years.

Court records show he had been found guilty of assault, criminal mischief, unauthorized use of a vehicle and failure to perform duties of a driver. The sexual assault against the 9-year-old girl occurred on Feb. 26 in an apartment. The suspect sexually abused the girl as she was sleeping.

Authorities say she woke up during the assault and later described the suspect.

Hiker finds remains of 24-year-old Oregon man

CARSON, Wash. (AP) — Authorities say a hiker in Washington state has discovered the human remains of a 24-year-old Oregon man in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest.

The Skamania County Sheriff's Office said that a hiker from Vancouver reported his finding Friday while hiking just north of Carson, Washington.

Authorities retrieved the body Saturday and on Monday, the remains were positively identified as Joshua A. Brown of Sunriver, Oregon.

After years of work, Cowlitz Tribe opens casino

SEATTLE (AP) — The Cowlitz Indian Tribe is opening its new \$510 million casino Monday, an effort years in the making.

Monday's opening of the casino near La Center, Washington, caused an eight-mile traffic backup on Interstate 5. The Washington State Department of Transportation said all of the casino's 3,000 parking spaces were taken, forcing traffic onto the freeway.

While Cowlitz officials hope the Ilani Casino Resort will draw about 4.5 million visitors a year, providing an economic boon to the tribe and the region, others are not so optimistic.

The Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde own the Spirit Mountain Casino in Oregon's Coast Range, and they fear Spirit Mountain could lose 41 percent of its revenue when the Cowlitz casino opens Monday near La Center, Washington.

Cowlitz Tribal Chairman William Iyall told the Seattle Times that opening day is a victory for the Cowlitz Indian Tribe. "This is a triumphant moment for the Cowlitz Indian Tribe because it marks the end of a 160-year journey back to our homeland, and the beginning of a new journey," Iyall said.

In 1855, Cowlitz tribal leaders refused to sign

a treaty and move into a proposed reservation site. Over time, members of the tribe scattered, and it took decades of campaigning to persuade the federal Interior Department in 2000 to grant the Cowlitz legal status as a tribe.

Five years ago, opponents of the proposed casino challenged an Interior Department decision to designate 152 acres west of La Center as a tribal reservation. That reservation designation cleared the way for gambling to take place.

Clark County was one of the opponents, raising several concerns in court including worries that the casino would

harm an area set aside for agriculture. Card-room owners in La Center and the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde also initially opposed the project over concerns about competition.

The casino complex is expected to employ about 1,500 people. The gambling operation will take up about 100,000 square feet of the building, with 2,500 slot machines and 75 table games. The complex also includes 15 shops, restaurants and bars, and later this year a 2,500-seat concert hall and convention center is scheduled to open. Plans call for a hotel to be built in coming years.

Corrections

The East Oregonian works hard to be accurate and sincerely regrets any errors. If you notice a mistake in the paper, please call 541-966-0818.

EAST OREGONIAN

— Founded Oct. 16, 1875 —

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333 E. Main St., Hermiston 541-567-6211
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Closed major holidays

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East Oregonian (USPS 164-980) is published daily except Sunday, Monday and Dec. 25, by the EO Media Group, 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton, OR 97801. Periodicals postage paid at Pendleton, OR. Postmaster: send address changes to East Oregonian, 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton, OR 97801. Copyright © 2017, EO Media Group

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