

World News Roundup

Church

'Wanted to leave'

Teen details fatal beating

NEW HARTFORD, United States, Oct 22, (Agencies): A 17-year-old boy testified Wednesday of being punched and whipped with a cord during a deadly assault in a US church carried out by his family and congregants.

The vicious Oct 11 beating at the "Word of Life Christian Church" left Christopher's 19-year-old brother Lucas dead and has plunged the small town of New Hartford, New York into mourning.

The boys' parents, Bruce and Deborah Leonard — aged 65 and 59 — have been charged with manslaughter. Four other church members, including a half-sister of the brothers, are charged with second-degree assault.

All six pleaded not guilty.

Speaking very softly, at times almost inaudible, Christopher told how the pastor, who has not been charged, asked the brothers to stay behind after a lengthy Sunday service because of "what we had done."

Present

Their parents, half-sister Sarah Ferguson, a stay-at-home mother of four, and three other members of the church were present, he said.

The teenager said he was punched in the stomach and whipped with the black electrical cord while being restrained in an hours' long ordeal that lasted from Sunday evening until around 3am on Monday.

The brothers were beaten, he said, because they did not want to answer questions on what they had been doing.

With a shock of thick brown hair, and Harry Potter-style dark-rimmed spectacles, he looked much younger than his 17 years. He wore a grey fleece over a purple T-shirt and khaki combat pants, and sneakers.

He told how Lucas was given CPR, refusing to look at his half sister, who sat just feet away dressed in an orange prison jumpsuit with a calligraphy tattoo etched on the back of her neck.

After the beating, Christopher said he threw up several times, found it difficult to breathe and lay on the ground with his eyes shut. "They took me to the second floor and they made me a bed," he said. He slept "on and off," and police came the next day.

Police said it took hours to track down Christopher, complaining that the church did not immediately volunteer his whereabouts.

Beaten

Police say Lucas was beaten to death because he wanted to leave the church, a secretive congregation of around 40 adults and children in the town next to Utica, 250 miles (400 kms) northwest of New York City.

Lucas died the following day in hospital. Christopher was also treated and is now under supervision of child services.

Oneida County district attorney Scott McNamara told reporters that he "can't imagine the stress" Christopher was under in taking the stand in a packed courtroom to testify against his family.

A New York state police officer, who photographed Christopher on Oct 12, said he sustained cuts and bruises to his back, and marks and bruises on his legs and buttocks.

Wednesday's preliminary court hearing has given prosecutors 45 days to present their case to a grand jury, who will determine whether to indict the suspects.

The judge set possible bail for Ferguson at \$50,000. The last suspect in custody, she sat sniffing throughout her brother's testimony.

Asked if he fought back, Christopher said he had no weapon. "I held up my hands," he said. "Were you covering yourself?" asked assistant district attorney Dawn Lupi. "Yes," he replied.

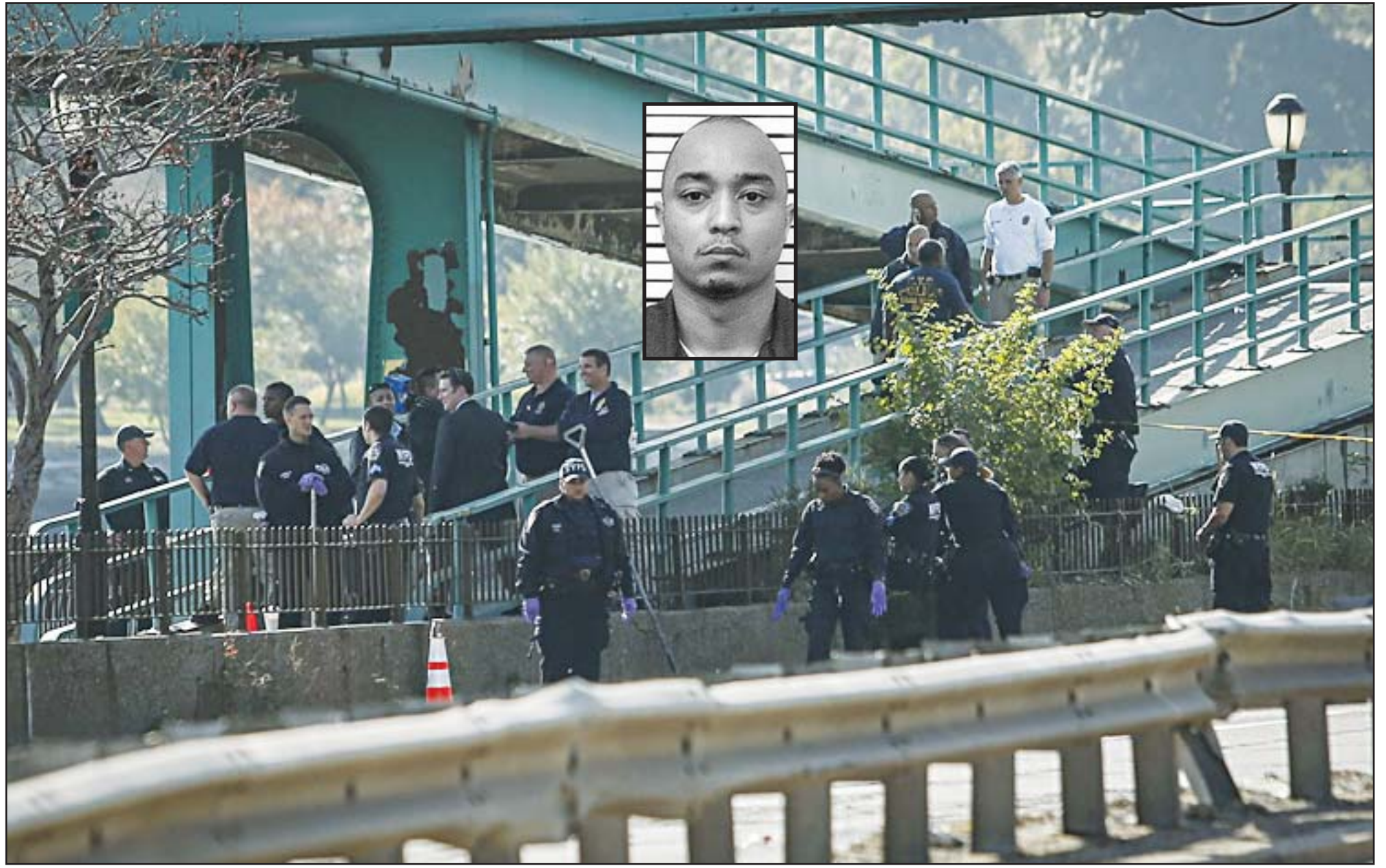
New Hartford, a small town of around 24,000, has been left shocked and saddened by the killings, and some have called for the church to be dismantled.

The testimony by Christopher was the first public description of last week's attack by the teenager, who was recently released from a hospital where he was treated for blunt force injuries to most of his body.

He said the church's pastor, Tiffany Irwin, organized the counseling session and asked the boys questions. He did not elaborate on the nature of the questions.



Christopher



NYPD officers look for evidence at the FDR Drive as investigations continue after a NYPD officer was killed in a confrontation with an armed suspect fleeing police on a pedestrian overpass over the FDR Drive in East Harlem on Oct 21 in New York City. Officer Randolph Holder was killed in an exchange of gunfire with a suspect who is now in custody. (Inset): This 2014 photo

provided by the New York Department of Corrections shows Tyrone Howard who is in police custody as the suspect in the killing of New York City Police Department Officer Randolph Holder, who was shot dead on Tuesday night, during an exchange of gunfire in East Harlem. (AFP/AP)

Career criminal arrested in slaying of NYC police officer

A career criminal accused of killing a police officer had been released from a US jail into a drug diversion program and was wanted in a shooting last month, said Police Commissioner William Bratton, noting that the suspect had shown an

increasing level of violence and shouldn't have been on the streets.

Tyrone Howard is expected to be charged with fatally shooting New York Police Department Officer Randolph Holder during a gunfight Tuesday night on a pedestrian bridge

leading to the East River after stealing a bike.

He was arrested in October 2014 along with 18 other people and charged with selling crack cocaine at an East Harlem public housing complex. But Bratton said Howard was

released into a drug diversion program, which is meant to keep drug offenders from overcrowding the city's jails.

"If ever there was a candidate not to be diverted, it would be this guy," Bratton said. "There are people in our

society who are criminals, who are violent criminals ... who should be separated from the rest of society."

But court officials said Howard qualified for the program because he was charged with selling and possessing drugs and was addicted. (AP)

Cyber

'Brennan family the victim'

WikiLeaks published CIA chief's emails

WASHINGTON, Oct 22, (Agencies): The CIA accused WikiLeaks of "malicious intent" after the anti-secrecy campaign group published an initial tranche of documents Wednesday it said were from the personal email account of director John Brennan.

The Central Intelligence Agency said that so far there was no indication that any classified information was released, but the leak is nevertheless hugely embarrassing for America's spy chief and WikiLeaks said more files would be published "in the coming days."

The US government has been dogged in recent years by high-profile leaks, including a trove of diplomatic cables published by WikiLeaks.

The six files did not include any top-secret documents. WikiLeaks however said that Brennan had "used the account occasionally for several intelligence-related projects."

Perhaps the most revealing document is a draft version of Brennan's background check questionnaire from a security clearance application he apparently made in 2008.

It lists several of his friends and associates, as well as a detailed work history and a slew of other personal and family details.

One of the names listed — along with a phone number — is George Tenet, who directed the CIA from

1996 to 2004. A woman who answered the phone at the number given said Tenet was not speaking to the press.

Harsh

The release also includes a 2008 letter from Christopher "Kit" Bond, then vice-chairman of the US Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, calling for a ban of certain "harsh interrogation techniques."

Additionally, a fax from 2008 details a legal spat between the CIA and a firm called "The Analysis Corporation."

There is also a 2007 draft memo Brennan wrote about Iran, and another draft paper dated July that year in which he outlines challenges facing the US intelligence community.

The CIA angrily hit out at WikiLeaks.

"The hacking of the Brennan family account is a crime and the Brennan family is the victim," it said in a statement.

"The private electronic holdings of the Brennan family were plundered with malicious intent and are now being distributed across the web."

"This attack is something that could happen to anyone and should be condemned, not promoted."

It comes days after it was reported that a teenage hacker had broken into Brennan's AOL account and had taken

mails and personal data.

For many computer users, AOL is synonymous with the days of the early Internet, when the company offered dial-up web access, and the apparently low-tech method the hacker employed to access the account is sure to spark ridicule in Washington.

The hacker has claimed he accessed the account by using a process called "social engineering" in which he tricked Verizon workers into divulging Brennan's personal information, then convinced AOL to reset his password.

Earlier this week, The New York Post reported that a hacker, who described himself as an American high-school student, had called reporters to describe his exploits.

Taunted

Using his purported Twitter account — @phphax — the hacker taunted authorities with redacted images of what appeared to be government information.

The Twitter account claims the hacker is 13 years old, and expresses support for the Palestinian cause.

Hackers recently breached US government databases and stole the personal information from background checks of 21.5 million people.

Senior officials have been criticized for not properly protecting sensitive and classified documents. Former CIA chief David Petraeus

was forced to plead guilty to improperly handling documents after it emerged that he loaned his mistress his Afghan war diaries.

And presidential candidate Hillary Clinton is under fire after she admitted that she only used a private email server during her time as secretary of state.

In a section of his security clearance application covering foreign contacts, Brennan writes that in August 2007: "I have had lunch twice and dinner once with Alan Lovell, a UK colleague with whom I worked closely during the last three years of my government career. Alan is currently posted at the UK Embassy in Washington."

Brennan's "government career" to that point consisted of decades at the CIA. It's not clear what Lovell's role was at the British Embassy. The State Department in 2009 listed Lovell as a "counselor" in the British Embassy. His LinkedIn profile currently lists him as working at the British Ministry of Defense.

The documents include a partially written position paper on the future of intelligence, a memo on Iran, a paper from a Republican lawmaker on CIA interrogations and a summary of a contract dispute between the CIA and Brennan's private company, the Analysis Corporation, which had filed a formal protest after losing a contract dealing with terrorist watch lists.



In this photo taken on Oct 19, Natasha Ward (left), and Erica Gordon, members of the Boynton United Community Choir, comfort each other to mourn the death of Corey Jones at the Bible Church of God, in Boynton Beach, Florida. (AP)



Raja



Stepp

America

Family seeks answers: The family of a black drummer and public housing inspector killed by a plainclothes officer is demanding answers after he was shot when his car broke down on a dark interstate exit ramp in affluent Palm Beach Gardens.

Officer **Noman Raja**, who had been investigating local burglaries, stopped his unmarked car early Sunday morning to check out what he thought was an abandoned vehicle, Palm Beach Gardens Police Chief **Stephen Stepp** said. Instead, "he was suddenly confronted by an armed subject" and fatally shot 31-year-old Corey Jones, Stepp said.

The shooting is the latest to happen amid a national debate about police use of weapons, particularly in cases involving African-Americans.

Investigators recovered a handgun on the ground that matched a box found in the car, Stepp said. Records indicate Jones purchased the weapon legally only three days before. Raja's car did not have a dashboard camera and the department's officers do not wear body cameras, the chief said.

Police have not said what caused the confrontation between the men or whether Jones knew that Raja was a police officer. "It would be premature to say we have all the facts and speculate as to what took place based on unconfirmed accounts," Stepp told reporters.

The state's legislative black caucus called on the governor to launch an independent investigation by the state law enforcement agency. Family members and friends were stunned by Jones' death, describing the housing authority inspector who moonlighted as a drummer in local bands as nonviolent. He was raised in a church-going family that includes pastors and a bishop.

He had been returning from playing at a local bar when his car broke down, local media reported. He pulled over and called a friend, who had come and unsuccessfully tried to help him get the car running. The friend left and Jones called a tow

truck, which hadn't arrived when Raja pulled up on the exit ramp near a busy intersection and several upscale shopping centers.

An uncle, Fred Banks, said Wednesday that the confrontation could have resulted

from mistaken identity and Jones may have thought he had to defend himself. (AP)

'Goodfellas' mobster testifies: An admitted mobster involved in the leg-

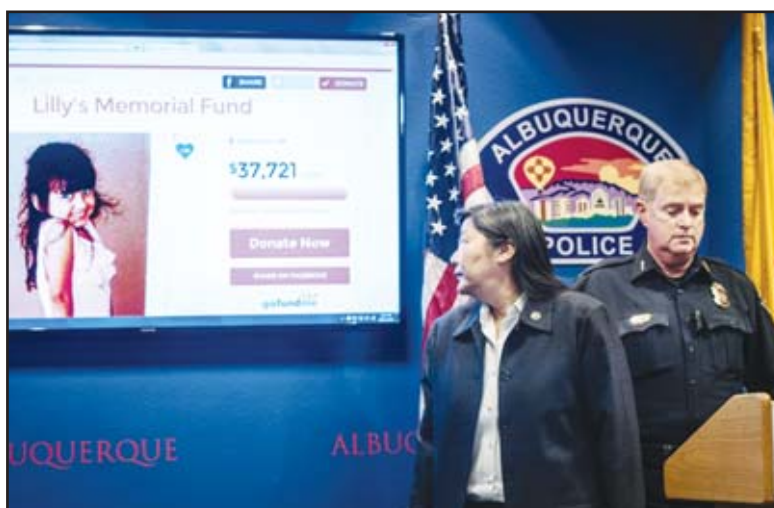
endary heist retold in the film "Goodfellas" told a jury on Wednesday he came forward three decades later to sign up to become a paid government informant because a gambling problem left him destitute.

Testifying in a case accusing his gangster cousin of helping plan the \$6 million Lufthansa robbery at Kennedy International Airport, Gaspare Valenti said he also was fed up with the Mafia. "I was just tired of that life," Valenti, 68, said at the trial in federal court in Brooklyn. "I was having nightmares about things I had experienced."

In exchange for the government covering his living expenses, Valenti agreed to wear a wire to record conversations with Vincent Asaro, a former captain in the Bonanno organized crime family who was the witness' mob boss. Prosecutors say the 80-year-old Asaro made statements implicating himself for the first time in one of the biggest armed robberies in US history.

Valenti testified that his gambling habit put him in such deep debt that it estranged him from Asaro. After they were reunited in 2008, Asaro reminded Valenti that he had always tried to shield Valenti from law enforcement, according to one tape heard by jurors.

"All this time you were with me, and I never got you pinched," Asaro said. (AP)



FBI special agent in charge Carol Lee (left), and Albuquerque Police Department Chief Gordon Eden address the media regarding the recent road-rage incident where four-year-old Lilly Garcia was shot in Albuquerque, New Mexico on Oct 21. (AP)

Small child killed in road rage shooting

WASHINGTON, Oct 22, (AFP): A four-year-old girl was fatally shot in the head while riding in a car with her father in New Mexico in what authorities called a road rage attack, US media reported Thursday.

A suspect identified as Tony Torres, 32, has confessed to the shooting of Lilly Garcia on Tuesday afternoon in Albuquerque, ABC News reported.

An anonymous tip led to the arrest, city police chief Gordon Eden told a press conference late Wednesday, the network said.

"She was so proud to tell people she just turned four," the girl's father Alan Garcia told ABC News.