

Sheriff: Man who killed 3 in Fla. used to work at dollar store

SARAH BRUMFIELD, JAKE OFFENHARTZ AND RUSS BYNUM
Associated Press

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — The Jacksonville shooter used to work at a dollar store and stopped in at one before a security guard's presence apparently led him to instead target the Dollar General down the road, where he killed three people.

He worked at Dollar Tree from October 2021 to July 2022, Jacksonville Sheriff T.K. Waters said at a news conference Monday. And, the sheriff said, he stopped at a Family Dollar store Saturday before pulling into a parking lot at Edward Waters University, where he donned tactical gear. He left when security approached.

"Based off what we saw: him stopping off at the Family Dollar and working at a Dollar Tree previously and then him going to Dollar General, that was his intent the whole time," Waters said. "Why that store? Still hard to tell."

In audio released Tuesday from a 911 call, the gunman's father said his son had stopped taking psychiatric medication and stayed in his room after dropping out of college and losing his job. Other records show the 21-year-old had encounters with police as a teenager, including one involving a suicide threat that led to an involuntary psychiatric evaluation.

Security footage from the Family Dollar shows him walking in and leaving a few minutes later with a small shopping bag. But after he reached his car, Waters said, a security guard pulled into the lot and the shooter left.

Waters believes the guard's presence deterred him. It appeared the shooter wanted to take action at Family Dollar, but he got



JOHN RAOUX, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Residents gather at a prayer vigil for the victims of a mass shooting a day earlier Sunday in Jacksonville, Fla.

tired of waiting, Waters said.

Minutes later, the gunman made his way to Dollar General in the predominantly Black New Town neighborhood and killed Angela Michelle Carr, 52, an Uber driver who was shot in her car; store employee A.J. Laguerre, 19, who was shot as he tried to flee; and customer Jerrald Gallion, 29, who was shot as he entered the store. The gunman then killed himself.

The Dollar Tree and Family Dollar chains have the same owner. Dollar General is a separate company.

Zachary Faison Jr., president of Edward Waters University, said Monday that the security officer, tipped off by observant students, likely stopped the killer from carrying out his racist attack at the historically Black institution. When the officer approached the shooter's vehicle, the driver sped off, hitting a curb and narrowly avoiding a brick column, Faison said.

But Waters said he doesn't believe the university was the intended location for the rampage. He noted two African American males were in the vehicle next to the shooter's in the lot.

Jacksonville is home to nearly 1 million people, one-third of whom are Black. The city elected its first Black mayor in 2011.

The weekend shooting happened as the city was preparing to commemorate what it calls Ax Handle Saturday, when a white mob used baseball bats and ax handles to beat peaceful Black demonstrators protesting segregation at a downtown lunch counter on Aug. 27, 1960.

Authorities identified the shooter as Ryan Palmeter, who they said was armed and ready to carry out an attack on Black people. During the attack, authorities said, Palmeter texted his father and told him to break into his room and check his computer.

Waters said a journal Palmeter's father found in his room was "the diary of a madman" that made it clear he hated Black people.

Forty-five minutes after the shooting began, Palmeter's father called 911 to warn of upsetting messages he discovered in his son's room, according to heavily redacted audio of the call released Tuesday by the sheriff's office in Clay County,

outside Jacksonville.

Details given in the call about the writings, which authorities said included "homicidal and suicidal" threats, were removed from the audio.

During the nearly 10-minute phone call, Stephen Palmeter told the dispatcher that his son had stopped taking his psychiatric medication and rarely left his room since dropping out of a local college.

"He doesn't go anywhere," the father said. "He flunked out of Flagler College, moved home a couple years ago, had a job for awhile at Home Depot and lost that job, and pretty much has been living in his room."

Additional records released Tuesday by Clay County show Palmeter had at least two encounters with police as a teenager. In 2016, officers responded to a domestic violence call following a physical fight between Palmeter, then 14, and his 20-year-old brother.

The following year, Palmeter fled his parents' home on a bicycle, leaving behind a note indicating plans to take his own life because of stress and painful thoughts. He was taken into custody under a Florida law that allows involuntary psychiatric evaluations for up to 72 hours.

In his writings, Palmeter indicated he was by himself, Waters said Monday.

"I'll tell you, he didn't like anyone," the sheriff said. "He may say that someone he was all right with, and then later on, he will say something disparaging about that group of people. He didn't like government. He didn't like the left or right, if that's what we're talking about. He didn't like anything."

2020 election fraud claims debunked as Trump lies continue

ROBERT YOON
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — With Donald Trump facing felony charges over his attempts to overturn the 2020 election, the former president is flooding the airwaves and his social media platform with distortions, misinformation and unfounded conspiracy theories about his defeat.

It's part of a multiyear effort to undermine public confidence in the American electoral process as he seeks to chart a return to the White House in 2024. There is evidence that his lies are resonating: New polling from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research shows that 57% of Republicans believe Democrat Joe Biden was not legitimately elected as president.

Here are the facts about Trump's loss in the last presidential election:

Reviews, recounts confirm Biden victory

Biden's victory over Trump in 2020 was not particularly close. He won the Electoral College with 306 votes to Trump's 232, and the popular vote by more than 7 million ballots.

Because the Electoral College ultimately determines the presidency, the race was decided by a few battleground states. Many of those states conducted recounts or thorough reviews of the results, all of which confirmed Biden's victory. In Arizona, a six-month review of ballots in the state's largest county, Maricopa, that was commissioned by Republican state legislators not only affirmed Biden's victory but determined that he should have won by 306 more votes than the officially certified statewide margin of 10,457.

In Georgia, where Trump was recently indicted for his efforts to overturn the 2020 result there, state officials led by both a Republican gover-

nor and secretary of state recertified Biden's win after conducting three statewide recounts. The final official recount narrowed Biden's victory in the state from just shy of 13,000 votes to just shy of 12,000 votes. In Michigan, a committee led by Republican state senators concluded there was no widespread or systematic fraud in the state in 2020 after conducting a monthslong investigation.

In Nevada, the then-secretary of state, Republican Barbara Cegavske, and her office reviewed tens of thousands of allegations of possible voter fraud identified by the Nevada Republican Party but found that almost all were based on incomplete information and a lack of understanding of the state's voting and registration procedures. In Pennsylvania, the final certified results had Biden with an 80,555-vote margin over Trump, or 1.2 percentage points.

In Wisconsin, a recount slightly improved Biden's victory over Trump by 87 votes, increasing Biden's statewide lead to 20,682, or 0.6 percentage points.

Minimal voter fraud in swing states

An exhaustive AP investigation in 2021 found fewer than 475 instances of confirmed voter fraud across six battleground states — nowhere near the magnitude required to sway the outcome of the presidential election.

The review of ballots and records from more than 300 local elections offices found that almost every instance of voter fraud was committed by individuals acting alone and not the result of a massive, coordinated conspiracy to rig the election. The cases involved both registered Democrats and Republicans, and the culprits were almost always caught before the fraudulent ballot was counted.

Award

From B1

these roles, showing dedication, passion and not one bit of insecurity," Shailor wrote in an email. "For this reason, he became a leader in the group, along with his work ethic, his quiet strength, his gentle sense of humor and his judicious sharing of Native wisdom."

Correcting the narrative

Nahwahquaw was released from prison in February 2021 and lives in Milwaukee.

Buoyed by friends, family and spirituality, he is working to lead a service-oriented life after 23 years of incarceration.

For those reasons, Nahwahquaw was one of eight people who will receive a "Correcting the Narrative" recognition Thursday from

The Community, a Milwaukee nonprofit.

Shailor nominated Nahwahquaw for the recognition and wrote that he is "a serious, hard-working, and deeply spiritual man who is dedicated to and supported by his family, focused on self-improvement and gainful employment."

Nahwahquaw appreciates the recognition but thinks many people are just as worthy.

"It's like, 'Who am I?'" Nahwahquaw said. "It's hard for me to believe that I'm someone to be honored that way ... I hope to be worthy of it."

Shannon Ross, The Community executive director, wants to humanize people who have criminal records, who he said are often viewed

inaccurately.

He aims to increase understanding about problems connected to the justice system so they can be addressed.

Ross and Nahwahquaw were incarcerated together for about six months. They worked in the same prison kitchen, where Ross said Nahwahquaw was a calming presence.

Ross said one common misunderstanding is that incarcerated people cannot change. People also often do not take into account the circumstances that resulted in criminal action.

"It's the complexity of it that people don't get," Ross said. "We take a shortcut to determining who a person is because they have a criminal record."

A living apology

Nahwahquaw, who is of Menominee, Ojibwe and Oneida descent, grew up on the Menominee reservation in northeast Wisconsin and moved to Milwaukee at age 15.

There, he used drugs and alcohol and was "living the fast life" — leading to a conviction in 1997 for first-degree reckless homicide.

Nahwahquaw said he never meant to kill anyone. He knows he can't undo the damage from his crime but is trying to make up for it by creating positive impacts.

"The only real apology of any value, in my thinking, is a living one," Nahwahquaw said. "Walking in a way that brings back healing and health to the community, to people."

Fernando Torres met Nahwahquaw about 15 years ago, and they lived on the same cell block for eight years. Torres and Nahwahquaw connected over sports, humor and self-improvement focused on education and spirituality.

Torres, who lives in Milwaukee, said Nahwahquaw is a humble man who goes out of his way to help people.

That includes helping Torres readjust to life when he was released from prison in 2022 after 42 years of in-

carceration.

Nahwahquaw assisted Torres with practicalities like insurance paperwork and building a credit score.

Adjusting to the world has not been easy, but Torres is doing so thanks to people like Nahwahquaw.

"You do get scared," Torres said. "Coming out into a world I didn't recognize, it's difficult. It's been challenging, but ... I've been able to survive out here and make a difference."

'We're free'

It also has been a challenging adjustment for Nahwahquaw, who sometimes doesn't believe he is out.

He initially had a job as a food delivery driver, which he greatly enjoyed.

It was wonderful "being out there in the car, all hours of the day, all hours of the night, totally legit, nothing to worry about, nothing to run from, just listening to good music by yourself in the world, not behind bars," Nahwahquaw said.

Nahwahquaw also worked at a shipping company. He recently earned a commercial driver's license and plans to work as a delivery driver.

In the weeks after his release, Nahwahquaw often went for walks to remind himself that he could do those types of simple things.

Similarly, Nahwahquaw often encourages Torres to enjoy activities like going for a drive, sitting by Lake Michigan or buying an ice cream.

"I always tell him, 'Brother, we're free. What more could a man want?'" Nahwahquaw said.

In prison, Nahwahquaw and Torres often talked about how they would trade their stresses for the challenges of the outside world.

"Now we have them headaches, but we should accept them briefly, face them with courage and with a healthy heart and mind," Nahwahquaw said. "It was part of everything we always wanted, and here it is."

Nahwahquaw appreciates moments like laughing with

family and sitting outside on a beautiful day. He often talks to young people and tells them to learn from his mistakes.

"The real wealth is in the kids, it's in the people, it's in the beauty of life, and it's boundless," Nahwahquaw said. "I try to be one with all of that."

Gradual change

Torres said misconceptions exist about people with criminal records.

"We're not the devil," he said. "We're human beings that made these errors, and we can change."

Nahwahquaw's change was gradual, but he is on a better path.

"Change, it doesn't come overnight," Nahwahquaw said. "It takes reflection, it takes knowledge of yourself and then it takes practice ... You have to do it consciously again and again until it becomes your nature. It becomes who you are."

Torres and Nahwahquaw work to positively influence one another. They meet monthly for cigars to laugh, share stories and build connections.

"We found a bond," Torres said. "We keep each other out of trouble ... When you get good friends, you don't want to lose them."

Nahwahquaw said he and Torres are brothers "from day one. I love that guy."

They remind one another to work through challenges by being of service.

"Our goal in this world is to be the best human beings that we can, and helping others is probably one of the most important things," Torres said.

Nahwahquaw knows obstacles lie ahead, but he plans to embrace them and keep moving forward with "a good heart and a good mind."

After a Shakespeare class altered how he viewed himself, Nahwahquaw is helping others while trying to embody a living apology.

"When the sun sets on my life, I hope to look back and see more good than bad," Nahwahquaw said.



ASK THE LAWYER



by
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ESTATE PLANNING 101

If you are a person who has no Estate Planning documents it is important to at least start with the basics to have yourself appropriately covered. The basic documents consist of a Will to indicate who will receive assets upon your death and be in charge of paying your debts. A General and Durable Power of Attorney determines who will handle your assets and pay your bills if you are alive but incapacitated. A Health Care Power of Attorney would enable someone to make healthcare decisions on your behalf if you are incapacitated. The fourth document is called an Authorization for Final Disposition which authorizes someone to make decisions about your body after death. For example, you may want cremation and a certain religious observance followed. Once you have the basics in place you could determine whether or not you want to have a Trust to work as your estate plan instead of the basic Will. Consultation with an Attorney is crucial to help make these decisions. To consider your Estate Planning needs and to schedule a free consultation, contact Pruitt Zabkowitz S.C. for a phone, video, or in-person appointment at 262-633-8301, or through our website at pruittlawoffices.com.

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entice charge, he faces a fine of not more than \$100,000 or not more than 25 years in prison, or both.

If convicted of the sexual assault of a student by school staff charge, Lizama faces a fine of not more than \$10,000 or not more than six years in prison, or both.

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