

Maryland man, 80, is accused of killing wife

Judge orders psychiatric exam for man after his arrest in hammer attack

BY DAN MORSE

An 80-year-old Maryland man who police say attacked his wife with a hammer was ordered to undergo a psychiatric exam Monday to see if he has the mental fitness to understand court proceedings in the first-degree murder case against him.

Vivian Stewart Nation allegedly killed his wife, Beverly Fletcher, 78, over the weekend inside their apartment at the Leisure World community in Montgomery County. Nation later told investigators they had been arguing over an issue with his doctor, according to court records.

"This is a domestic violence homicide," Assistant State's Attorney Jamie Jacobson said in court Monday. "There is evidence of strangulation as well as trauma to the victim's upper body."

After police were called to the couple's apartment Saturday evening, they found Fletcher dead on the floor with a hammer on her neck, according to an investigator's affidavit filed in court. They also found a knife and a screwdriver with blood on them in a room nearby, the affidavit stated.

"This case is an obvious tragedy for all involved," said Sean Mukherjee, the head public defender in Montgomery County, whose office represents Nation.

He noted that Nation has lived eight decades without any record of violent or serious crimes. "Something more is clearly going on here," Mukherjee said, adding that the court-ordered evaluation would "help us start to figure out what happened."

When Nation spoke with investigators, according to their court filings, he told them the argument over the doctor turned into a physical fight.

"He stated that he pushed the victim to the floor where he believes she may have hit her head," investigators wrote. "He then got on top of her, and pushed a hammer against her throat, pressing the hammer down with both hands."

Nation was booked into jail Sunday and ordered held without bond.

It is rare that homicide defendants are 80 years or older. Over a recent five-year stretch, there

SEE SLAYING ON B15



ROBERT ELMORE

Planting season yields a wedding band lost for 15 years

Even as Virginia farm changed hands, owners preserved a reminder about the ring

BY KYLE MELNICK

Wayne Corprew cut down a Christmas tree for his family at a farm in 2010 — and when he got to his truck to drive it home, he realized his wedding ring was missing. He searched to no avail, then reported it to Sue Bostic, who owned the 50-acre farm.

Bostic wrote Corprew's name and cellphone number on a yellow sticky note that she pinned onto a bulletin board in her office.

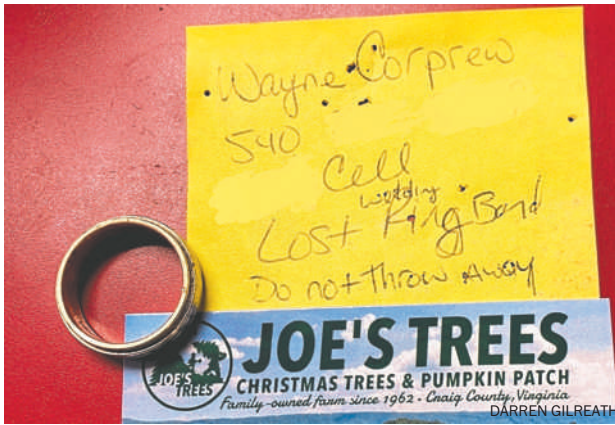
"Lost wedding Ring Band," the note said. "Do not throw Away."

Fifteen years later, Corprew was shocked to receive a call from Joe's Trees in Newport, Virginia.

The farm's new owners found the ring covered in dirt while planting corn last month. Then they leafed through the sticky notes on the bulletin board, each one with a handwritten name and lost item, and called Corprew with the news. Corprew, who gave up on retrieving the ring a few months after he lost it, was shocked. Roanoke news channel WDBJ first reported the story.

"How in the world, in 50 acres of Christmas trees, you're walking all around it, and you get a call 15 years later and they find it?" Corprew, 61, told The Washington Post.

Corprew said he and his then-wife, Teresa, found an eight-foot-tall tree with the "perfect shape" at Joe's Trees in December 2010. Corprew cut it with a handsaw and —



TOP: Wayne Corprew holds the wedding band he lost at a Virginia farm in 2010. **ABOVE:** The recovered ring next to the farm's sticky note about the missing band.

for some reason he can't remember — removed his gloves. He dragged the Fraser fir to a nearby trail, where a tractor picked it up and took it to the front of the farm. Corprew and Teresa rode a trailer with a man dressed as Santa Claus to the same location.

When Corprew loaded the tree into the bed of his Ford F-350, he noticed his yellow and white gold wedding band

SEE RING ON B14

Former federal prosecutors oppose Bove as appeals court pick

Letter writers call former Trump lawyer 'the worst conceivable nominee'

BY SPENCER S. HSU

A group of former federal prosecutors for the District of Columbia urged the Senate in a letter sent Monday to reject the nomination of Emil Bove for an appeals court judgeship in Philadelphia, calling the former personal lawyer for President Donald Trump "the worst conceivable nominee" for a lifetime judicial post.

The signers of the letter previously led a similar effort by more than 100 former assistant U.S. attorneys to oppose Trump's nomination of Ed Martin as U.S. attorney for Washington. They now argue Bove's conduct is "far worse and more dangerous." In key instances, Martin as acting U.S. attorney was following the orders of Bove, a senior Justice Department official, they said.

Bove "has demonstrated a willingness to ignore his oath to the Constitution and to disregard the Rule of Law in an effort to conform to every possible whim of the President," wrote letter organizers Dan Toomey, former president of the D.C. Assistant U.S.



VICTOR J. BLUE/FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Emil Bove, now up for an appeals court judgeship, served as a lawyer to Donald Trump last year.

Attorneys Association and a prosecutor from 1968 to 1971, and Charles R. Work, a Reagan presidential appointee and former president of the D.C. Bar. Five other former federal prosecutors who previously served under both Republican and Democratic ad-

ministrations joined the letter.

"How can Bove be trusted to be fair and impartial in reviewing the appellate cases before him when they conflict with the Trump Administration's desires?" the former prosecutors wrote to the Senate Judiciary Committee.

They said they were sending the letter now before polling former prosecutors who opposed Martin because of how quickly Bove's nomination was moving.

Trump in May nominated Bove to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 3rd Circuit, a court that covers

Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware.

"Emil is SMART, TOUGH, and respected by everyone," Trump wrote of the former assistant U.S. attorney in Manhattan. "He will end the Weaponization of Justice, restore the Rule of Law, and do anything else that is necessary to, MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN. Emil Bove will never let you down!"

His nomination has come under fire after a former Justice Department immigration lawyer, Erez Reuveni, brought a whistleblower complaint last month stating that he witnessed Bove telling subordinates he was willing to ignore court orders to carry out the Trump administration's deportation strategy. Reuveni described three instances in which department officials ignored such orders, presented legal arguments with no basis in law or misrepresented facts to the court.

One instance involved sending a planeload of more than 100 Venezuelan migrants accused of being gang members to a high-security prison in El Salvador.

At a Senate Judiciary Committee confirmation hearing on June 25, where Bove drew support from the Republican-led panel, he denied suggesting there would be any need to consider ignoring

SEE BOVE ON B20

Judge wants a plan for Abrego

XINIS GRILLS JUSTICE DEPT. ATTORNEYS

Orders testimony on how a removal would proceed

BY STEVE THOMPSON

A Justice Department lawyer said in federal court in Maryland on Monday that the Trump administration plans to again deport Kilmar Abrego García, this time to a country other than El Salvador, without waiting for the outcome of federal human smuggling charges against him in Tennessee should a judge there order him released pending trial.

But, during a three-hour hearing, U.S. District Judge Paula Xinis appeared incredulous over the administration's lack of a definite plan for doing so, grilling Justice Department attorneys for details on what country officials are considering and how the deportation would proceed.

"It's like trying to nail Jell-O to a wall to figure out what's going to happen next week," Xinis said, appearing exasperated after Justice Department lawyers avoided definitive answers to questions about the plans.

The Department of Homeland Security "would explore its options for removal closer to the time when it would be taking him into custody," Justice Department lawyer Jonathan Guynn said.

In an attempt to get answers, Xinis ordered the Trump administration to produce an official with knowledge of the plans to testify before her at 1 p.m. on Thursday.

"Given the history in this case of an unlawful action, a series of unlawful actions, I do believe it's well within my authority to at least get the information," Xinis said.

The hearing was part of the now dual legal drama surrounding Abrego after he was deported to a notorious El Salvador prison in March in violation of a federal immigration judge's 2019 order barring his removal to that country. Abrego, 29, who entered the United States illegally around 2011 after fleeing a gang seeking to recruit him in El Salvador, was brought back to the U.S. last month to face the human-smuggling charges that stemmed from a 2022 traffic stop in Tennessee. He is currently being held in a Nashville jail pending the outcome of his criminal trial.

At the hearing in Maryland, Xinis denied motions by Justice Department lawyers to dismiss the civil case brought against the Trump administration by Abrego and his family over the illegal deportation. The administration lawyers had argued that the case is now no longer relevant because her order to have him returned to the U.S. was fulfilled when he was taken to Tennessee.

But Xinis said that she has not determined yet whether the Trump administration has entirely fulfilled orders from her, an

SEE ABREGO ON B14

TODAY'S WEATHER

8 a.m.	Noon	4 p.m.	8 p.m.
81°	90°	87°	79°

High today at approx. 2 p.m.: **93°**

Precip: **90%** Wind: **SSW 6-12 mph**

For weather news, go to **B20**

THE DISTRICT

Police announce nearly 30 arrests on fireworks-related charges. **B14**

OBITUARIES

Jane Stanton Hitchcock, 78, wrote novels about the dark sides of the rich. **B15**

Lost on a 50-acre farm 15 years ago, wedding band is returned to owner

RING FROM B13

was missing from his left ring finger. Corprew had bought the wedding band in the summer of 2008 from Ginger's Jewelry in Roanoke for about \$1,100.

Corprew searched every nook and cranny in his truck before reporting the ring missing to Bostic. Corprew placed the tree beside a window in his living room in Roanoke, but he returned to the farm the next day with a metal detector to search the ground, which was covered by a few inches of snow. He and Bostic's son, Jake, searched again in the following months to no avail.

"That was literally like trying to look for a needle in a haystack," Bostic said.

In the summer of 2011, Corprew gave up and bought an identical wedding band. Still, Corprew's mother, Jean Bowman, visited the farm in the following years to ask about it. Corprew still looked for the ring whenever he cleaned his car.

The wedding band lost sentimental value to Corprew when he got divorced in September 2013. But the farm did not give up. When Bostic sold the business to her nephew, Darren Gilreath, in April 2018, she told him to never lose the note.

"This is important," she recalled telling him. "If you ever find this ring, you need to keep this."

The note remained on the bulletin board even as Gilreath and his wife, Samantha Gilreath, pinned thank-you cards, family photos and other mementos there. Corprew remarried in December 2022 and now wears a



ABOVE: Wayne Corprew, second from right, holds the ring he lost at Joe's Trees in Newport, Virginia, in 2010. He reported it missing to Sue Bostic, right, the farm's owner at the time. Samantha Gilreath, second from left, found the ring last month while working on the farm with Darren Gilreath, left, her husband. **RIGHT:** A view of the area near where the ring was found.



black and blue titanium wedding ring.

Last month, Darren, 47, tilled parts of the farm's pumpkin patch. Amid the smell of hay, freshly cut grass and evergreen trees on a hot and sunny day, Samantha was planting corn along a tilled row on June 11 when she spotted a small ring covered in dirt.

"The thought never crossed our mind to not return it," said Samantha, 43.

The next day, Darren looked through a handful of lost-and-found notes — regarding missing bracelets, necklaces, rings, credit cards and glasses — on the bulletin board. He found the note with Corprew's name near the back. Darren said he wasn't sure if the phone number would still work.

Corprew was driving for his job delivering expedited freight when he answered the phone and Darren asked Corprew to describe the ring he lost. Corprew recited the inscription inside the ring: "WITH THIS RING I THEE WED."

When Corprew picked up the ring the next day, the Gilreaths showed him the spot they found it. Corprew recognized the spot as the same place he cut the tree in 2010.

Corprew doesn't know what he'll do with the ring. He might sell it, but he's also considering keeping it. He has a great story to tell about it.

At the farm, there are still a handful of missing items the Gilreaths are searching for. Finding Corprew's ring "leaves hope" they'll locate the others too, Darren said, even if it takes another decade or two.

THE DISTRICT

Nearly 30 people arrested on fireworks-related charges, police say

BY MARTIN WEIL AND JUAN BENN JR.

D.C. police arrested nearly 30 people — mostly juveniles — on fireworks-related charges over the Fourth of July weekend as they tried to crack down on the detonation of prohibited fireworks in the city.

Officers also seized hundreds of prohibited pyrotechnics, including firecrackers, the police department said in a news release Monday.

Twenty of the arrests on fireworks-related charges occurred between Friday and Saturday evening in Southeast Washington's Navy Yard neighborhood, police said in a statement. Another seven were arrested Saturday evening in the District's U Street corridor, including an adult who was also charged with assault on a police officer. Those arrested ranged in age from 12 to 37, police said.

According to police, the Navy Yard arrests came after authorities received "numerous calls re-

garding disorderly behavior by groups of juveniles, to include the use of illegal fireworks."

Most of the initial activity prompting complaints occurred in the area around First and M streets SE, police said. It prompted the summoning of additional officers to the scene, according to police, to stop the goings-on. Later Saturday, police said, the enhanced presence "disrupted" smaller groups of young people engaged in "similar unlawful activity" around New Jersey Avenue

and M Street SE. The area is the redeveloped dining and residential sector near Nationals Park.

Police said groups then traveled from Navy Yard to the U Street corridor, where officers were already deployed to deter potentially unruly behavior.

Besides the fireworks-related arrests, police said, three people were taken into custody on other charges. One of them was arrested for an alleged simple assault, one for alleged public marijuana use and one for allegedly having an

unlicensed pistol. Police said a gun was found.

In addition, police said, two people were stopped for youth curfew violations and released into the custody of a guardian.

Officers seized 400 prohibited pyrotechnics — including firecrackers, fireworks rockets and Roman candles — from the Navy Yard area over the weekend, police said.

D.C. allows the use of sparklers shorter than 20 inches and some ground-based fireworks. But it

prohibits anything that can "launch and explode," and anyone found engaging with or in possession of fireworks could face arrest or fines up to \$2,000.

Before the holiday, the D.C. fire department was among a number of agencies that issued announcements in advance of the Fourth spelling out fireworks regulations. It noted that from Friday through Sunday, the emergency communications center would have two call-takers assigned specifically to fireworks calls.

Trump administration ordered to give details on new plan to deport Abrego

ABREGO FROM B13

appeals court and the Supreme Court regarding Abrego, and that the case will go on until she does.

In the meantime, Xinis said, she is considering a request from Abrego's lawyers that he be returned to Maryland and ensured some type of due process should the government try to again deport him. The lawyers asked that Abrego be guaranteed advanced notice of any deportation proceedings, with a specific designated country, so that he can have a meaningful opportunity to challenge the action.

"What we have is the very real risk that in nine days we could be faced with the same set of circumstances that got us here in the first place — an illegal removal," said Andrew Rossman, one of Abrego's lawyers. All his client is asking for, Rossman said, is to be "assured a day in court."

Lawyers for the Trump administration argued that the government fulfilled a Supreme Court order to facilitate Abrego's return and therefore the case is moot.

"Your honor, it's our position that this was an isolated mistake," Justice Department lawyer Bridget O'Hickey said, "and then we engaged in substantial efforts to remediate the mistake, and that we will have no intention of committing the same —"

Xinis cut her off. "For three months, your clients told the world they weren't going to do anything to bring him back," the judge said. "Doesn't that matter?"

Lawyers for Abrego said the Trump administration did not, as the Supreme Court ordered, ensure that Abrego's case was handled "as it would have been had



JOHN AMIS/EPA/SHUTTERSTOCK

he not been improperly sent to El Salvador." Rather, officials rapidly assembled a human-smuggling case against Abrego based on a three-year-old traffic stop that was not seriously investigated until the outcry over the case, they said.

"On June 6, just in time for a news conference unveiling its indictment, the Government returned Abrego Garcia — not to Maryland to restore the status quo ante — but to Tennessee to face the criminal charges it rushed to bring," Abrego's lawyers said in a court filing.

The trial on human-smuggling charges centers on a 2022 traffic stop near Cookeville, Tennessee,

during which state highway patrol troopers suspected Abrego of transporting undocumented immigrants for money. Attorney General Pam Bondi and other administration officials have accused him of being a hardened criminal and gang member, alleging in court filings that he was a prolific smuggler in a ring that illegally transported thousands of undocumented workers across the country. His lawyers and family have denied he is involved with any gang.

After a detention hearing in that case last month, U.S. Magistrate Judge Barbara D. Holmes delivered what amounted to a rebuke of the Trump administra-

tion's assertions that Abrego is a dangerous criminal by ruling he must be released pending trial. But Justice Department lawyers are seeking to have that ruling reversed, and a hearing is scheduled for July 16.

On Monday, Xinis repeatedly tried to pin down Justice Department lawyers about the plans to deport him again, should a federal judge in Tennessee affirm that Abrego should be released pending trial. Guyann, the Justice Department lawyer, said that the current plan is to deport Abrego to a third country but that the plan could change, and that to say more would be "speculation."

"I don't buy that for a second,"



JIM WATSON/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

LEFT: Katheryn Millwee holds up a likeness of Kilmar Abrego Garcia in Nashville last month. **ABOVE:** Members of the government's legal team depart federal court Monday in Greenbelt.

the judge snapped.

Xinis also sharply questioned O'Hickey about assertions by the government's legal team in May that the administration was powerless to return Abrego from El Salvador — assertions it made nearly a week after federal officials in Tennessee obtained a sealed indictment against him.

"The only way that is a logical use of our federal resources is if you're going to bring him back," Xinis said, suggesting Justice Department assertions had not been truthful. "Otherwise, why are you charging it?"

Xinis asked whether the indictment was in part to help facilitate Mr. Abrego's return to the United States. O'Hickey said that was not the case.

During another back-and-forth, Xinis admonished O'Hickey after she appeared to contradict statements by other government officials that the criminal investigation into alleged smug-

gling by Abrego did not begin until late April, after the furor over his unlawful deportation. "I want you to be really careful with me," the judge said, exuding distrust.

For weeks, the Trump administration did not appear to be taking any steps toward returning Abrego to the U.S., and Xinis showed increasing signs of frustration as officials resisted her attempts to learn more about what was being done or not done. She ordered expedited discovery because, as she said in an order in late May, of the administration's "refusal to follow the orders of this Court as affirmed by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit and the United States Supreme Court."

Xinis has accused the administration of acting in bad faith and has kept a potential finding of contempt on the table, saying she needs to establish a record of the facts.



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The Washington Post

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