

Parnell Brothers Post Bond, Released Until Sentencing

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Stewart and Michael Parnell posted secured bonds on Monday morning to obtain their release until sentencing, according to the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Georgia.

The bonds, \$150,000 for Stewart Parnell, 60, and \$100,000 for Michael Parnell, 55, were both secured by cash deposited with the court. With the bonds, the brothers agreed to appear for future court proceedings, including sentencing later this year or early in 2015, and to surrender to serve whatever sentences the court may impose.

The men were [taken into custody](#) Friday after being [convicted](#) by a jury in Albany, GA, of a fraud and conspiracy scheme. The scheme was uncovered after an investigation into the role of the now-defunct Peanut Corporation of America (PCA) in a 2008-09 Salmonella outbreak that resulted in more than 700 confirmed illnesses and nine deaths. Their weekend detention apparently occurred because they could not put the cash down for the bonds before the District Court Clerk's office closed on Friday.

After a seven-week trial, the 12-member federal jury found Stewart Parnell, who owned PCA, guilty on 67 federal felony counts, including fraud, conspiracy, obstruction of justice and numerous charges of introducing misbranded and adulterated food into interstate commerce.

The jury also found Michael Parnell, PCA's peanut broker, guilty on 30 separate charges. He was found not guilty on a dozen other charges for which the jury apparently did not hold him responsible involving PCA shipments of some loads of misbranded or adulterated peanuts or paste.

Mary Wilkerson, the third defendant, was found guilty of one of the two counts of obstruction of justice charged against her. She was PCA's quality control manager at its plant in Blakely, GA. She remains free on an unsecured \$25,000 bond.

Alan Dasher, the assistant U.S. attorney who tried the case, asked that the Parnell brothers be taken into custody until their bonds could be secured because each could now be sentenced to two to three decades in prison. Sentencing dates have not been set.

Also Monday, prosecutors agreed that the government's subpoenas for documents held by two law firms that represented the PCA corporate entity before it was liquidated are now moot because the criminal trial is over.

The subpoenas were dropped on the law firms just before the trial, and the firms and their attorneys aggressively moved to have them quashed on legal doctrines involving work products and lawyer-client privilege. U.S. Department of Justice Attorney Patrick H. Hearn said the government reserves the right to re-subpoena in the event there is a re-trial.

Defense attorneys for the former PCA executives said they plan to appeal the trial's outcome, but no appeals have yet been filed.