

Candy poisoning

Defense wants early hearing date

PASADENA, Tex. (AP) — An attorney said Wednesday he will seek an early examining trial for Ronald Clark O'Bryan, an optician charged with the Halloween trick-or-treat poison murder of his son.

Richard Harrison of Dallas said he spent three hours with O'Bryan at Pasadena jail and that O'Bryan is "heartbroken over the boy's death."

Timothy O'Bryan, 8, died Halloween night less than two hours after eating powdered candy from a Pixy Stix which medical examiners said also contained cyanide.

Harrison said he was asked to enter the case at the request of a client who is O'Bryan's uncle. The O'Bryan family may retain another lawyer later, he said.

"In the meantime, I am trying to protect this man's rights," Harrison said. An examining trial determines whether the state has sufficient evidence to send a case to a grand jury.

Pasadena police and Dist. Atty. Carol Vance would not discuss details of the case with newsmen but said they believe they have sufficient evidence to back the charge filed against O'Bryan, 30, after his arrest late Monday night.

Sources close to the five-day investigation, however, said the charge was filed after O'Bryan took a polygraph test and after the discovery the father had recently taken out one or more life insurance policies on the son.

The Rev. Jimmie Jones, pastor of the Second Baptist Church, said he talked with O'Bryan at the jail and that O'Bryan emphasized his innocence.

"He doesn't have any idea of why the police charged him," the Rev. Mr. Jones said.

O'Bryan and his family have been active workers at Second Baptist Church.

Timothy was buried Saturday. A friend of the family told newsmen O'Bryan memorialized his son Sunday night by paraphrasing "Blessed Assurance" during church services.

The man said O'Bryan sang the hymn this way "This was Tim's story, this was Tim's song, praising his Savior all the day long."

"There wasn't a dry eye in the church when he was through," the friend said.

Jimmy Bates, a Pasadena friend who was with O'Bryan and three youngsters while trick-or-treating, said O'Bryan carried the candy collections after rain-soaked bags broke.

Bates said he does not know where the Pixy Stix came from but that he remembers seeing them somewhere along the route the group followed.

O'Bryan is being held under \$100,000 bond.

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Nixon taking short walks; new complications reported

LONG BEACH, Calif. (AP) — Former President Richard M. Nixon has a new complication, a slight case of pneumonia which is being fought with antibiotics, his doctor said Wednesday.

The condition — called pneumonitis — was apparently not considered serious. Dr. John C. Lungren said that, over-all, Nixon was exhibiting "slow but gradual improvement" since he was placed on the critical list last week following phlebitis surgery, although he was still listed in subintensive, or serious, condition.

Aided by nurses, Nixon has been taking brief walks around his hospital room. The pneumonitis, which Lungren said was centered in a part of the right lung, was presumably responsible for the partial collapse of that organ which was disclosed Tuesday.

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Houston city bus strike begins without major traffic problems

HOUSTON (AP) — Houston moved through the first full day of its first city-wide bus strike in 24 years Wednesday without major traffic snarls or heavy absenteeism.

The 800 HouTran drivers and mechanics began their strike Tuesday night in support of demands for pay increases totaling \$1.35 over two years.

HouTran, a management firm which operates the bus system the city purchased in April, had offered increases totaling 80 cents.

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The old contract that expired Saturday night had a base pay of \$3.70 an hour increasing to \$4.45 after two years of service.

There was no indication of resumption of negotiations. M.S. Hendrix, president of Transport Workers Local 260, said the union is determined to remain on strike until its demands are met.

Stanley Gates, HouTran manager, said the company has made its final offer.

Also, E. K. Kincaid, a federal mediator, was out of town.

Police dispatcher Alvin Albritton said only nine accidents were reported during the early morning rush hours, compared to about a dozen on a normal day.

Major downtown merchants and employers reported little absenteeism, saying many employees apparently made transportation arrangements in anticipation of the strike.

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Tower predicts heavy spending from Congress

AUSTIN, Tex. (AP) — Sen. John Tower, R-Tex, said Wednesday the nation should brace itself "for another round of highly inflationary spending by an overwhelmingly Democratic Congress."

Tower, who was not up for reelection this year, said that "a great many fine, well-qualified Republican candidates fell victim to economic conditions over which they—and the White House—had no control."

"The Democrats have been in control of Congress but now they have even more power and that carries with it even more responsibility. My guess is that, unless the Democratic majority changes direction and exercises more fiscal responsibility than they have in the past, the pendulum will swing back two years from now to a more fiscally responsible viewpoint represented by the Republican Party," Tower said in a statement issued by his office here.

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