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Hearst's mental state may affect trial date

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — A hearing on the mental competence of Patricia Hearst could spur a swift trial date or delay proceedings indefinitely for the newspaper heiress.

Miss Hearst was scheduled to appear at the hearing today before U. S. District Court Judge Oliver J. Carter, who will issue the ruling on her competence to stand trial on charges of taking part in a bank robbery while she was a fugitive with the Symbionese Liberation Army (SLA).

Attorneys for Miss Hearst, who has not yet entered a plea, said she would not take the witness stand.

Carter said in recent out-of-court comments that Miss Hearst probably was competent to proceed. His final ruling will be based on reports from three psychiatrists and a psychologist who examined her at the San Mateo County Jail.

It was uncertain whether a final ruling on her mental condition would be made at today's hearing. Defense and prosecution attorneys, who have read Miss Hearst's psychiatric reports, are expected to argue their views on her mental competence. The judge could then take the matter under study or could issue an immediate decision.

A ruling that Miss Hearst is mentally competent could mean the swift setting of a trial date, perhaps this year. She also would be required to enter a plea.

A decision that she is incompetent could delay proceedings indefinitely while she received treatment in a mental hospital.

Carter spent two hours meeting privately with defense and prosecution attorneys Monday to set "ground rules" for today's hearing. He reportedly requested legal arguments not only on Miss Hearst's mental state but also on how soon her trial must begin in order to fulfill provisions of the new Federal Speedy Trial Act.

The 21-year-old Miss Hearst last

appeared before Carter on Sept. 23 with a different team of attorneys representing her. They sought her release on bail and said she had been brainwashed and tortured by the SLA. Carter revoked bail for Miss Hearst until he decided on her mental condition.

Asked about Miss Hearst's condition Monday, her new attorney, F. Lee Bailey, said she was in "good" spirits, "improved" from his previous visits with her.

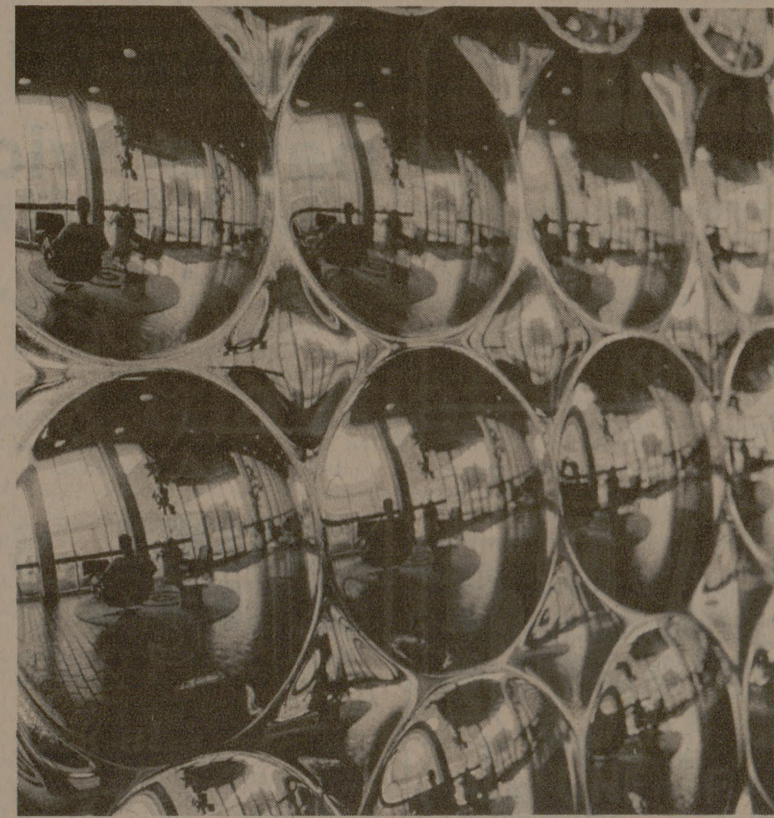
But Bailey predicted that her trial on federal bank robbery charges would not begin until 1976. The government was pressing for the

trial to begin by Dec. 27.

"If the judge told me to start the trial tomorrow, I could do it," Bailey said. "But I wouldn't like it."

Bailey's partner, Albert Johnson, has said the defense team devoted so much of its time to the psychiatric question that there hasn't been time to prepare Miss Hearst's defense case.

Miss Hearst was kidnaped by the SLA on Feb. 4, 1974, but she later professed allegiance to the SLA and allegedly took part in an SLA robbery of the Hibernia Bank branch here in April 1974 and other crimes. She was captured Sept. 18.



Staff photo by Steve Goble

Circle series

A silvery wall ornament in the Krueger-Dunn Commons produced this repetition of circular images.

Least-considered amendment deals with resource protection

By JACK HODGES

Battalion Staff Writer

One of the least talked-about revisions to the proposed Texas Constitution is the general provisions amendment.

The most important aspect of the proposition is that the quality of the environment is to be protected. Dr. Gary Halter, Texas A&M political science professor and College Station City Councilman, said Monday.

In the proposed amendment, the state legislature would be charged with implementing and enforcing policy that would protect the environment. The present constitution has no such provision.

Halter said one of the more controversial parts of the proposition was the insurance of adequate water resources for the state.

"Portions of West Texas have

very little water but the water-rich parts of East Texas won't sell water because they fear they won't have enough in the future," Halter said.

"It's the same way with development in West Texas. If developers begin moving to West Texas, businesses may move out of the big cities with the developers," Halter added.

He said it seemed selfish to hinder development in other parts of the state "but that's how some cities survive."

In the proposed constitution, if water becomes scarce in an area, state funds would be used to import water from other sources within Texas or from other states.

Halter pointed out that Houston is fighting a battle with subsidence because that city is using cheap ground water instead of drawing more costly surface water that

would reduce subsidence in the surrounding areas.

The proposition also provides for the preservation of coastal and natural resources of the state and, subject to "reasonable limitations," the right of public access to free and unrestricted use of beaches.

The problem, Halter said, "is that landowners of coastal areas want to develop the land into a Miami-type area, while the public, who doesn't own the land, want the beaches to stay the way they are."

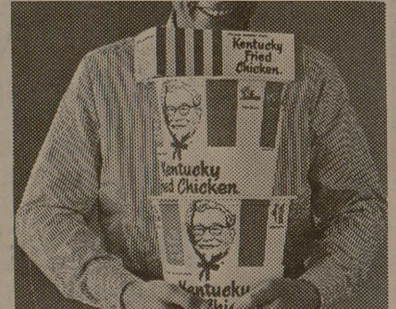
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