

Convicts escape Juarez jail

Inmates heading for Texas?

United Press International
CIUDAD JUAREZ, Mexico — A violent escape by 10 heavily armed Mexican prison inmates has officials on both sides of the border worried that the men, all convicted drug traffickers, may plan to cross into Texas. "It's just a thought," said Ciudad Juarez police chief Jose Refugio Rubalcava. "We believe these people had plans. When you're talking about drugs you're talking about money, a lot of money."

The prisoners, all convicted of marijuana smuggling activities in Mexico's west coast state of Sinaloa, made their way out of the border city Saturday by commandeering a police car and kidnapping two Mexican policemen, whom they later pistol-whipped and abandoned with the car, officials said.

Mexican officials Sunday dispatched a 40-man posse to search for the "desperados," while U.S. officials boosted border security in case they tried to cross into Texas.

A report late Sunday that one of the escapees had been captured at Caseta, Mexico, across the Rio Grande from Fabens, could not be substantiated by authorities.

The convicts escaped at 7:30 a.m. Saturday, using two apparently smuggled guns to disarm guards at three stations in the federal prison at Ciudad Juarez, Rubalcava said.

"They disarmed and tied up the guards at two of the doors," he said. The guard at the main door, an older man, was taken hostage. In addition to the guard's pistols, they took an M-1 rifle and a shotgun from the prison office.

Rubalcava said the convicts had two cars waiting nearby, and they abandoned the kidnapped prison guard and made their way east. He said the cars ran a stop light in suburban Saragosa, and when two traffic policemen gave chase, one of the escape vehicles lost a wheel and stopped. "The escapees took the policemen hostage and drove away in their patrol car."

Rubalcava said a police task force moved east in search of the gang, with two U.S. Border Patrol aircraft overhead.

Meanwhile, north of the Rio Grande, assistant chief Border Patrol agent Ray Reeves, in neighboring El Paso, said the gang's initial route could have taken it to any one of three ports of entry on the Texas side of the river — Ysleta, Fabens or Fort

Hammond — each of which was manned by only two or three agents. Security was immediately increased Saturday and Sunday nights, and the two aircraft spotted the commandeered police car.

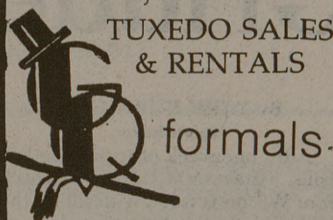
"The plane spotted the commandeered police car, with a number 308 on the trunk," Reeves said. "The car was found near Lomas Arenas, Mexico."

Rubalcava said Mexican authorities located the car near what appeared to be a makeshift landing strip. The abducted policemen had been beaten and abandoned.

Rubalcava said officials were working on three possibilities: that the convicts had grounded in the ranch country around Juarez, that they had flown into the interior or that they still planned to cross into Texas.

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Owners to reply in ship collision

United Press International
NEW YORK — Owners of an oil tanker and freighter that collided off Texas last fall, killing 32 persons, have three weeks to answer a tentative Liberian board of inquiry report blaming both crews for the accident.

The 482-foot freighter Mimosa and the 732-foot Burmah Agate, laden with 390,000 barrels of crude oil, collided 5 miles offshore of Galveston before dawn Nov. 1. The Burmah Agate ran aground, spilled oil and burned for 69 days.

Both ships were of Liberian registry and the accident occurred outside the 3-mile limit of U.S. jurisdiction.

sa and the chief mate of the Burmah Agate had invalid or forged licenses and that the captain of the Mimosa had filed a fraudulent vision test.

The board charged the Mimosa was traveling at excessive speed through an anchorage area and that the Burmah Agate — there was conflicting testimony whether it was anchored or under way — was improperly lighted.

The report said the government could bar licensing of the Mimosa officers and so notify other nations. The captain and chief mate of the Burmah Agate were among 31 men who died aboard that vessel.

The board charged the Mimosa lacked a firefighting team and that the freighter's chief mate abandoned ship at full throttle, which meant the Mimosa circled dangerously near offshore oil platforms before tugs stopped it.

The Mimosa pierced the Burmah Agate's port side, gouging a giant hole in its cargo area and causing the tanker to explode into flames, spill oil and run aground in 40-foot deep waters outside the entrance to Galveston Bay.

The tanker had been bound for a Houston refinery.

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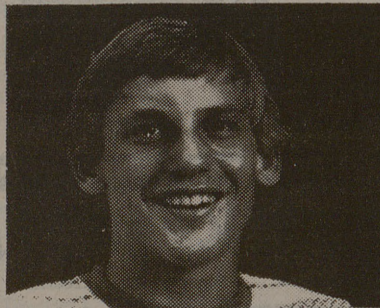
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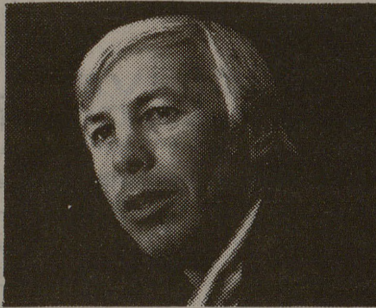
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