

# Old man wants to die in jail

**United Press International**  
CALVESTON — Santos Casarez Rios, 74, walked into a bank, laid his cane threateningly on a counter and ordered a teller to fill his brown paper sack with money. But police said Tuesday his aim was not easy riches.

After the teller handed him more than \$10,000, Rios told a bank official he wanted to be arrested and walked over to sit beside a security guard until police came for him.

"He flat made a statement that 'I'm old, I'm sick, I'm going blind, I took the money, I want to go back to the penitentiary and die,'" United States National Bank Vice President Gilbert M. Bray said.

"He said... he was all alone."

"Just looking at his record, he probably spent a good portion of his life there prison," prosecutor George Cooley said. "I'm just assuming he can't make it out in the real world."

Police said Rios walked into the bank unarmed Monday and handed teller Teresa Kalsnes a note that read, "This is a robbery. Fill this bag." She gave him \$10,643.

Even though Rios looked old, stood 5'-6", weighed 135 pounds, wore thick glasses and walked with a cane, Kalsnes said she was convinced "he was serious" and was frightened. She felt differently Tuesday.

"He's an old man," she said. "I feel sorry for him because he wants to go back to prison. Why die in prison?"

Rios was jailed in lieu of \$20,000 bond pending arraignment.

Prosecutors said they planned a psychiatric evaluation and then prosecution as usual, if warranted.

"Our concern is right now we want to see if he's mentally competent," Cooley said. "It's kind of a strange situation, but if this man wants to go to the pen and we turn him loose now he might go out and shoot somebody to make sure he goes."

Cooley said reports from the National Crime Information Center indicated Rios had "25 or 30 aliases." Of his 50 arrests, two dozen were for immigration violations, others for burglary, theft and robbery, with 19 convictions.

"He's been out a little more than a year from the federal penitentiary," Cooley said. "I talked to him down at the police station. I said, 'What penitentiary you want to go back to?' He said 'Any of them.'"

"I said, 'Well how about Huntsville?' (the Texas Department of Corrections, which inmates consider inferior to federal prison.) He said 'Oh no. Not Huntsville.'"



## Local celebrity

Tamara Follett, one of the students from Texas A&M who appears in Playboy magazine's September feature, "Girls of the Southwest Conference," autographs a copy of magazine at a local bookstore Monday.

Staff photo by Janet Golub

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# GTE \$31 million rate hike okayed; cooled by \$4 million poor service fine

**United Press International**  
AUSTIN — The Public Utility Commission Tuesday granted General Telephone Co. a \$31 million-a-year rate increase but slapped the company with a \$4 million penalty for poor service, ordered the new rates delayed until Oct. 1 and threatened to revoke the operating license of the state's second largest phone company if service is not improved.

The rate increases will raise minimum monthly service charges for residential customers — currently ranging from \$4.75 to \$16.20 — to \$7.75 in small exchange areas up to \$12.25 in cities where customers place the largest number of local calls.

Company officials complained the delay in raising rates of its 1.2 million customers would cost the firm \$2.5 million.

"We had not expected anything like that," said F. E. Hightower of San Angelo, vice president of General Telephone Co. of the Southwest.

Hightower also expressed surprise at the PUC move to initiate an investigation beginning next Feb. 1 to determine if the company is meeting quality of service standards.

The PUC may then begin proceedings to revoke the firm's operating certificate and allow other firms to provide service to areas now handled by GT.

"General Telephone doesn't intend to relinquish its properties without making every effort to retain them," Hightower said.

The \$4 million penalty — deducted from the sum the PUC would otherwise have allowed in rate increases — and the delay in implementation of the \$31 million increase granted marks the first time the state agency has financially penalized a company for poor service.

"This commission is not going to continue to permit a company to provide the kind of service that General Telephone has in this state," said George Cowden PUC chairman. "I don't think we have a company of any size in this state that has as poor a record of service as General Telephone."

Cowden said he would favor delaying the rate hike for as much as six months but H. M. Rollins, the newest member of the commission, suggested Oct. 1 as the deadline.

Rollins noted unsatisfactory service was a major issue in the administrative hearings over GT's first rate increase request since the PUC was created in 1975.

"If there was ever a case to penalize a company, this is it,"

argued Don Butler, attorney for the Texas Municipal League and cities opposing the rate increase.

The company's attorney, W. W. Wueste of San Angelo, said efforts to improve service were hampered by ice storms in the north and west and tropical storm Claudette along the Gulf Coast in 1979.

Wueste said no other company has been penalized for service problems and urged the PUC to allow time for the company to improve.

Allen King, a PUC attorney, said complaints about service come from every area served by GT and are not limited to times of adverse weather.

"Never in my three years with the commission have I been subjected to such a barrage of complaints as we have received from customers of General Telephone," King said. "Consumers do not object to paying a fair rate for telephone service but they can neither understand nor tolerate the poor quality of service by this company."

General Telephone — which serves more than 260 communities and cities in Texas, ranging from San Angelo to Texarkna, Baytown to Sherman, and Del Rio to Bryan — had requested a \$58 million rate increase.

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