

State / National

Letter arrives 6 years late from the twilight zip

United Press International
DALLAS — The letter that arrived in Mrs. W.W. Lawton's mailbox the other day looked in-

nocent enough at first glance — not torn, not dirty, not crumpled, not yellowed.
It was the second look that indi-

cated the letter might have come from the twilight zip: the double postmark, the 10-cent stamp and the return address — from a dead woman.

The irony of the letter was not so much that it arrived six years late, but that it was sent by a Fort Worth woman who has been dead for two years. The writer was trying to apprise her friend that her husband had died.

"It gave me a very strange feeling," Lawson said. "I saw the return address from Mrs. Bob Phillips and I thought 'Why am I getting a letter from her when I know she has been dead for two years?'"

After seeing the return address, Lawton noticed the letter had been postmarked twice, most recently on March 13. The other postmark was from 1975.

"It was shocking to get a letter from someone who is dead," she said. "It looks like it was just mailed, it wasn't yellowed, dirty or even crumpled."

During the six years it took the letter to travel the 30 miles from Ft. Worth, Phillips died of cancer.

Killers watched vacation home

Judge trailed before death

United Press International
ROCKPORT — The FBI tipped local authorities to the presence of two convicted killers near a federal judge's vacation home four months before the judge was assassinated, but did not report any suspicions the killers were stalking him, according to Aransas County Sheriff Bob Hughes.

A Dallas newspaper reported Monday U.S. District Judge John Wood Jr. was trailed for several months before a sniper shot him down outside his San Antonio condominium.

In a copyright story, the Dallas Morning News reported the surveillance followed a secret meeting at San Antonio in December 1978. Wood was shot May 29, 1979.

Hughes said Monday the FBI had told his office convicted hit-man Charles V. Harrelson and an associate, convicted killer Larry Culbreath, were in the area, but that he thought they were setting up a gambling operation.

Meanwhile, Harrelson's attorney, Joe Chagra of El Paso, said he expects to be indicted in the case when a federal grand jury investigating the assassination reconvenes this week in San Antonio.

"They better have a strong case against me if I'm indicted for the Wood murder," Chagra said in a weekend interview. "It's their move."

Chagra's brother, narcotics kingpin Jimmy Chagra, currently is in a federal prison on a conviction of continuing criminal activity. Jimmy Chagra was scheduled to appear before Wood, known as "Maximum John" for his harsh treatment of drug offenders, when the judge was killed.

The Morning News reported a close friend of Harrelson — a key suspect in the Wood shooting — was one of four people to rent a cabin for a week across Copano Bay from Wood's beach home near Rockport where the judge was vacationing.

Culbreath, Harrelson and two other men rented a cabin at the Sea Gun resort in January 1979,

from which they watched the judge's movements, the newspaper reported. The group returned to the resort later in the year when the judge made another trip to his beach home.

Sheriff Hughes said that on each occasion, his office swept the cabin for evidence after the Harrelson party left. He said the searches turned up telephone records and gambling paraphernalia, but he was not aware of any connection with the Wood case.

The Morning News said it learned from a man who claimed to be at the 1978 meeting the conference was held to discuss obtaining weapons for a contract murder and watching closely the movements of a "top federal official."

The News source, who has given an affidavit to authorities, said he was offered \$100,000 and access to cocaine if he would find weapons for the job and dispose of them after the killing.

The unidentified man also said he was told the assassination target would be placed under sur-

veillance to determine his routine. He said the location in "an Anglo area" near San Antonio International airport, lived within a five-minute drive of the airport.

A charter captain at the Gun Marina said the group's boat for three consecutive days take them to Key Allegro, the judge's home was located.

"It was really strange weather conditions at the time," he said.

One law enforcement official at the resort as Harrelson, investigators said they are trying to determine whether Harrelson, a convict, was there, the News said.

Harrelson remains in Houston on various weapons, gambling, drug bond jumping charges. He has been charged in Wood's death and has repeatedly denied involvement in the case.

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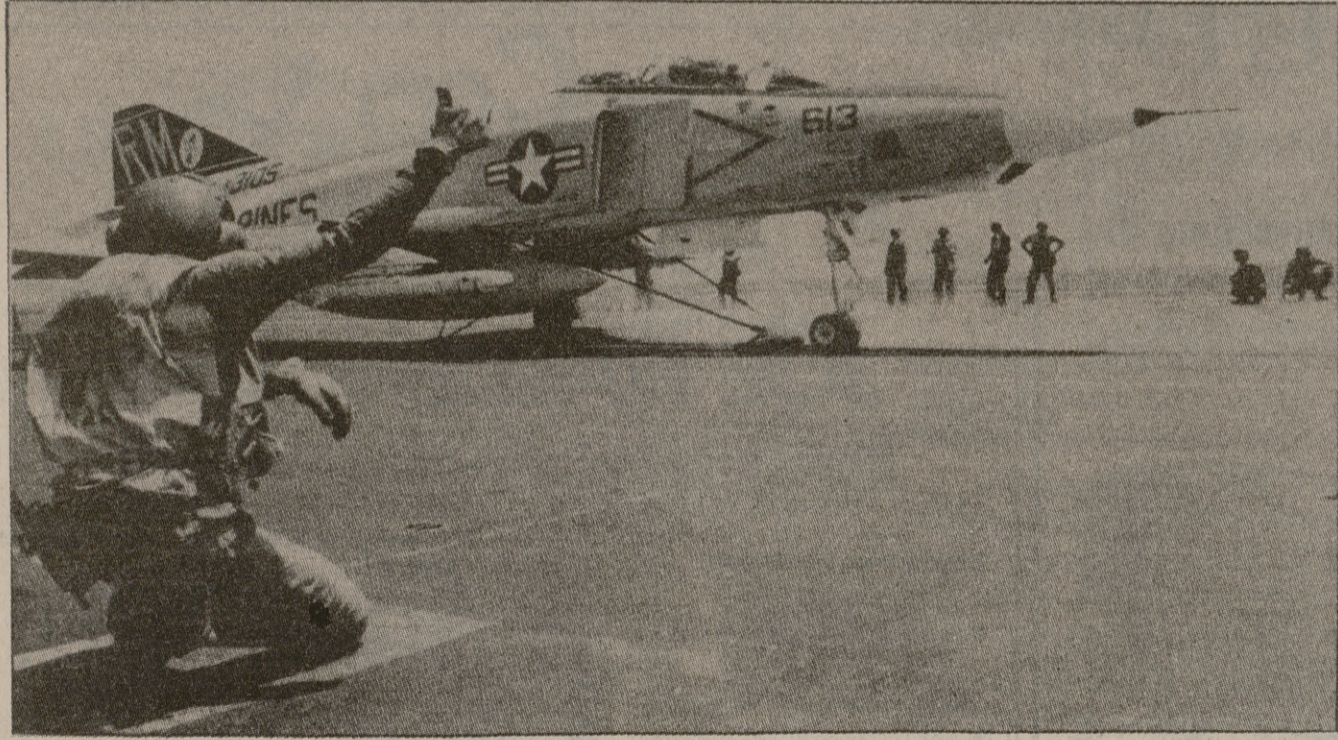
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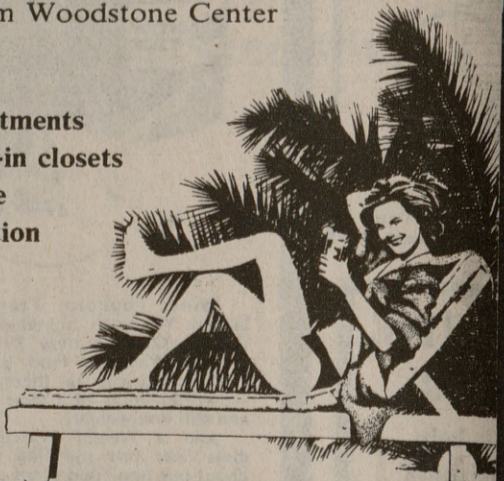
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Mental test slow charge in killing

United Press International
CORPUS CHRISTI — Appropriate results of a psychiatric examination will determine what charges are filed against a man accused of throwing his paraplegic mother through the window of an east floor hospital room, police announced Monday.

The 38-year-old suspect was found clad only in undergarments in his mother's hospital room for 1 chanting "religious stuff," the rest of the room, police said.

Police said Fausta Lopez, Mathis, who recently had been disabled by a stroke, was hospitalized from her hospital room window Saturday.

"After (Mrs. Lopez fell), the suspect went and took a shower," an officer said. "He was yelling 'Hallelujah' and 'God bless you'."

Police said the suspect, whose name was not released, would be subject to psychiatric examination before charges are filed.

The suspect's wife was on the ground floor of the hospital, reportedly watched her mother-in-law fall to her death. She was waiting for her husband to return from his mother's room when she heard glass break and saw Lopez fall.

Investigators said Lopez's ability probably prevented her from crying out for help.