

State / National

Fruit fly infestation battled

Blockade bans produce

United Press International
AUSTIN — Texas agriculture officials today proceeded with plans for a blockade of California fruit and produce being shipped into Texas, although California growers filed suit seeking an injunction to halt the quarantine. Deputy Agriculture Commissioner Bob Williams said the blockades would be erected at noon on half a dozen or more highways leading into Texas from the west to be certain produce from the area of California infested with Mediterranean fruit flies is not shipped into Texas without first being fumigated or cold treated.

Shortly before noon, Dallas attorney Richard Lannen filed suit on behalf of the California Grape and Tree Fruit League against Agriculture Commissioner Reagan Brown in an effort to prevent the blockade.

The case was assigned to federal judge Patrick Higginbotham, who heard an earlier suit against a previous blockade of California fruits by Texas. The judge's clerk said a conference was being held to determine when to schedule a hearing on the latest legal action.

The earlier blockade was lifted after five days following a hearing before Higginbotham in what Lannen called "basically an out-of-court settlement."

The new suit, like the previous action, argues that the Texas quarantine — against California fruits and vegetables that serve as hosts for the fruit fly — violates the U.S. Constitution and federal regulations by attempting to regulate interstate commerce.

"The federal government and the state of California have taken action which is sufficient to control the problem and we don't think the state of Texas should be involved," Lannen said.

Williams said the Department of Agriculture planned to erect roadblocks at noon on Interstate 10 west of El Paso, on U.S. 66 west of Amarillo, and on several other routes into the Texas panhandle from New Mexico.

"We're going to stop every truck and ask to see their papers, see what they're carrying," Williams said.

"We think we've got it pretty well sealed. We're not keeping everything out, we're just checking. They must have the proper papers."

Under terms of the quarantine, fruits and vegetables from outside the three quarantined counties in California will be admitted to Texas if they have certificates from California agriculture officials saying they are from areas free of fruit flies.

Produce from the three quarantined counties will be admitted only if the fruits and vegetables were fumigated or cold treated before leaving California.

Fruits and vegetables travelling through Texas to other states will be admitted to pass through the state without being fumigated if the trucks are inspected and sealed at the Texas border.

Williams said the Department of Public Safety is cooperating with agriculture department officials in the blockades. "If somebody tries to run the blockade, we'll notify the DPS as to who they are and what they are," he said.

Williams indicted in three Atlanta murders

United Press International
ATLANTA — Choosing impartial jurors to try Wayne B. Williams, indicted in two of the city's 28 murders of young blacks, will take "extraordinary measures" and may be impossible in Atlanta, his parents' attorney says.

Williams, 23, a black freelance photographer and would-be talent scout, was indicted Friday in the murders of Jimmy Ray Payne, 21, the 26th victim, and Nathaniel Cater, 27, the last and oldest of the victims.

The bodies of Payne and Cater were found almost a month apart but within 500 yards of each other in the Chattahoochee River — a suburban waterway in which the bodies of four other victims were found.

Harold Horne, who represents Williams' parents, Homer and Faye Williams, said Sunday that massive publicity in the case may make it impossible to choose an objective jury in Atlanta.

"Extraordinary measures will be required wherever you try this case," Horne said. "I personally have an opinion that I would prefer to try the case outside the city of Atlanta."

Prosecutors, who said their interview did not violate the elder Williams' rights, have offered to

provide Horne with transcripts of the questioning session.

Horne said he has "no concrete" information whether prosecutors are trying to implicate Williams' parents but said the fact that the couple lived with their son in the same home where fiber evidence was found has generated suspicion.

"Since the Williams lived there, stayed there 24 hours a day, there is at least the implication that they should have known something about it," Horne said.

Mary Welcome, Williams' own attorney, told UPI Saturday that she would decide at "a later date" whether to ask for a change of venue in his trial, but added that "the intensity of the publicity has been the same everywhere."

"There's not a place in the country that doesn't have radios, newspapers and TVs," she said.

Williams first came to the attention of police in the predawn hours of May 22, when he was stopped near a Chattahoochee River bridge moments after a stakeout officer heard a loud splash in the water. Two days later, Cater's body was found about a mile downstream from the bridge.

The 23-member grand jury that indicted Williams will meet again Tuesday and may consider evidence in some of the other slayings.

More than 300 killed or hurt in walkway collapse

United Press International
KANSAS CITY, Mo. — For more than eight hours Tom Weir struggled with the idea that his death was imminent and that his tomb would be a ton of rubble on a hotel lobby dance floor.

Weir was one of the more than 300 people killed or injured when two suspended walkways collapsed Friday night in the Hyatt Regency Hotel. He was in serious condition Sunday at an intensive care ward of Truman Medical Center, feeling like the "walking dead."

"We'd just picked up our drinks and walked under the walkway," he said while nurses hovered, hooking him up to a dialysis machine.

"Jean (his wife) was walking about 4 or 5 feet ahead of me when it happened. I heard a big yawn and saw the thing coming down."

The crush of debris forced Weir into a cross-legged position. When he was finally pulled free, he had a cervical fracture, a traumatic back injury and a kidney dysfunction.

"For about a half an hour, there was just screams and moans. Then I heard Tom Weir. It was my wife checking on me."

Jean Weir also survived, and was recuperating with less serious injuries at another hospital.

Weir said rescuers assigned numbers to trapped victims to determine where in the pile of rubble they were located. Periodically they would have a roll call.

"The first count there were eight. By the last one, there were five left," he said. "I was pretty sure we were going to die in there eventually."

Weir said every so often he and his wife would check on each other.

"At my feet were a woman and her son. He was a nice little kid, a real trooper," Weir said.

The woman and the boy also survived.

"They dug a hole to the north of me where the mother and son were. They pulled them out and then they got me."

That was about 3 a.m., eight hours after the walkways fell.

"It was just the luck of the Irish to be the last one out," Weir said.

Unlike Weir, John Davis didn't get his drink Friday night and that may have been his salvation. And, unlike Weir, Davis was one of the first pulled from the wreckage. His wife and several of his friends were not as fortunate.

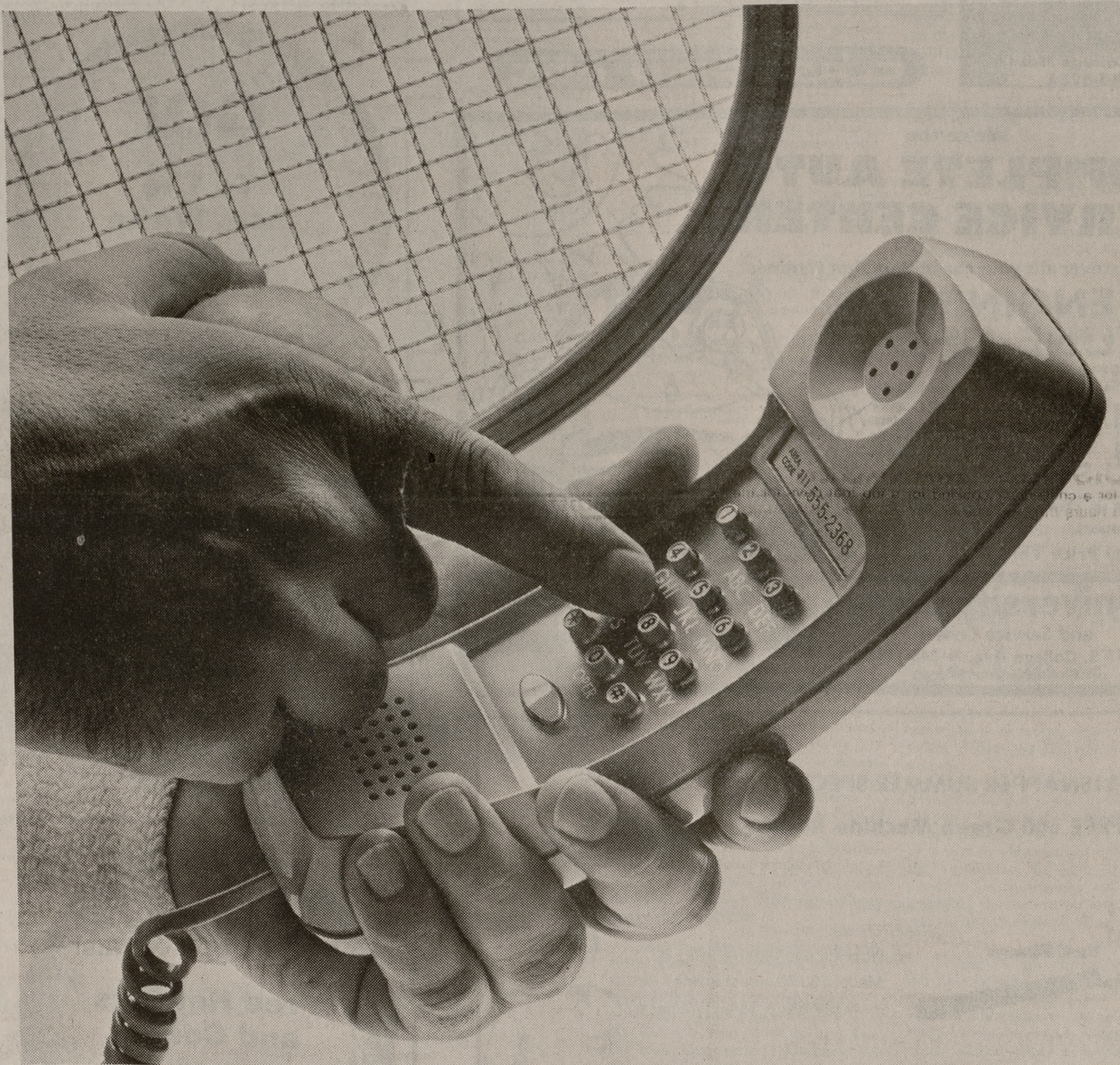
Davis said he was waiting in line at a bar near the dance floor when the walkways fell. Beside him stood his wife and near her were several friends.

Sunday Davis learned his wife was listed among the dead. So were several of his friends.

"If I was over another foot, I'd be with my wife and friends right now," Davis said from his bed in the intensive care unit of the Truman Medical Center.

"I was standing in line at the bar. The Hyatt still owes us for those drinks," said Davis, 38, of Kansas City.

Weir and Davis were visited by Mayor Richard Berkley Sunday afternoon. Berkley also visited three other survivors of Friday's tragedy.



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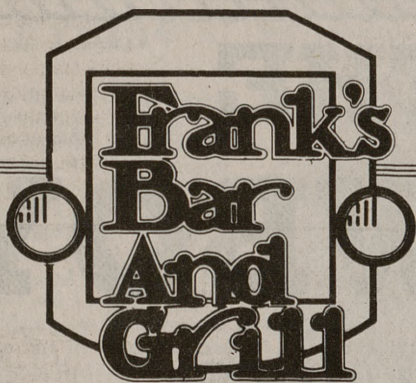
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