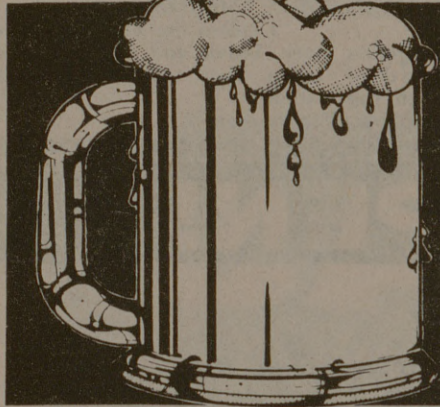


# State

## Big, Bad, Bodacious Beer Bust V



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### Suicide threatened previously

## Mother's condition critical

United Press International  
ROCHESTER, N.Y. — Harriet Berne threatened to shoot herself if her two sons were ever taken away, her former husband, Dale, said.

Berne made the comment after he returned to Rochester Wednesday night with his two children.

"The boys, before we left (Houston), asked the social workers to take care of their mother," said Berne, a school principal in suburban Irondequoit. "She had told them that if they were ever

taken from her, she would shoot herself with a pistol.

"They were very concerned for her."

Berne remained in critical condition at a Houston hospital after apparently taking an overdose of drugs Tuesday, just hours after she was ordered to return Scott, 11, and Mark, 7, to their father.

Dale Berne said he and his sons have "been getting along just fabulously."

"Right now we are reestablishing our relationship and they're calling me dad. They're

also interested in opening some Christmas presents that have been waiting for them for two years now," said Berne.

He had not seen his sons from Aug. 2, 1979, when his former wife fled Rochester during a court-ordered visit, until last week.

Berne said the boys will undergo psychological testing but said he felt they would adjust "fairly quickly."

Berne said his children were told they would be beaten if they were returned to him.

"We knew that they were told that they would be beaten if I ever got them back," Berne said. "That was told to them on and on until it was ingrained in their minds."

Despite the bitter struggle in getting his sons back, Berne said he would permit his former wife to see the children "as soon as she and they have stabilized."

"I would never keep a natural parent from seeing their children."

When Family Court Judge Bruce Wettman ordered the boys returned to their father, Berne sat stunned. She hugged a friend, then hurried from the courtroom. She made no comment to reporters.

"She was so depressed," said her father, Al Zilber. "Obviously, a woman who loves her children so much can't be a bad mother."

Zilber, who had joined his daughter from his Long Island home for this week's hearings, said he did not know she apparently planned to try to kill herself.

"She said she was going to down and take a nap," he said. "She was in the other room and she thought she would do anything foolish."

Fire Department paramedics said they found Berne unconscious in respiratory shock. Several empty pill bottles were found.

"This has been a week of weeks," Zilber said. "We had kids. It cost us a fortune (in lawyers). Then the kids taken by him without allowed to say goodbye to them this."

Berne faces charges of criminal interference in New York allegedly stealing the boys from her former husband, who had been awarded their custody in a long and bitter trial.

She was free on \$5,000 bail and faced extradition to New York to stand trial. She also was charged with unlawful flight to avoid prosecution.

Federal law, the Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction Act, requires Wettman to return the children in the absence of extraordinary circumstances.

However, Zilber believes is an extraordinary circumstance. "Why can't they say, Child with whom would you like to live. She might have sacrificed her life."

Wettman ordered counsels to allow time for the child to say goodbye to their mother before Berne and his second wife, Dolores, took them back to Rochester.

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## Marine recruit dead to be investigated

United Press International  
DALLAS — A Dallas congressman has promised to investigate the death of a Marine recruit whom a fellow recruit says was allowed to drown in full view of an instructor and other recruits during training.

U.S. Rep. Jim Mattox, D-Texas, said Wednesday he would look into the death of Pvt. Randall Christian, a former Dallas life-guard and high school swim team member, who died last week during a six-lap swimming test at Camp Pendleton, Calif.

"If it appears they are carrying out a cover-up," Mattox said, "then we are most certainly going to talk to the witnesses themselves."

Recruit Greg Washington, a friend of Christian, 18, wrote to his family that his former classmate had almost finished the test when he began struggling.

"The instructor was an arm's length away from him in the water watching him," Washington

wrote. "Randy kept going and going under water until, from what I understand, the instructor pushed him under his feet."

"Randy stayed under 15 seconds, then they went in to push him in, but I did see just stand there and look at struggle."

Marine Maj. James Seal said a statement released late Wednesday that under questioning Marine officers, Washington's statements in the letter misquoted.

"They are correct to a point," Seal said. "However, he avowed saying Christian pushed under water. In fact, he says that at no time did anyone push under water."

Members of two recruit families had expressed frustration Wednesday that their would be pressured into their statements.

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- \*Be of sound moral character



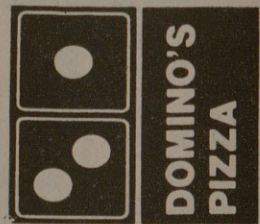
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