



Bird's eye view

staff photo by Eric Mitchell

Noah Smith gets a good view of the Texas A&M University campus from the shoulders of his father Steve Smith, a Texas A&M psychology professor.

## Victims file suit to block rapist's book rights sale

United Press International  
LAKE CHARLES, La. - "Ski Mask Rapist" Jon Simonis should not be allowed to exploit his victims a second time by selling book and movie rights to his three-year crime spree, says a lawyer suing him for more than \$1 million on behalf of a family he terrorized.

Attorney Russell Tritico, who filed suit in DeRidder, La., said the rapist's plans to sell book, magazine and movie rights are despicable.

"The whole purpose (of the suit) is that — in event this character follows through on some ideas that he is going to write a book — any money that he might receive ought to go to the victims," Tritico said. "Also, it may deter him from exploiting these people to gain further notoriety."

Tritico said the book and

movie plans seemed like a desperate attempt by Simonis to prolong his own notoriety.

"I don't know, of course, whether that's his motive or whether he's sick enough to believe that he's helping the public by writing books about avoiding people like him," he said.

Simonis, a former lab technician from Lake Charles, is serving 21 life terms plus 2,690 years at the state penitentiary at Angola, La.

After his arrest Nov. 27, Simonis entered quick guilty pleas to crimes in Jennings, Baton Rouge, DeRidder, Gonzales and Lake Charles — saying he wanted to spare his family the embarrassment of a jury trial.

Tritico said he tried to have Simonis served personally with the suit at Angola Prison, but was unsure whether he had been officially notified. No court

hearing has been set on the matter, the lawyer said.

"We have to wait and see what actions he takes to defend himself," Tritico said.

He said Simonis has 15 days to respond to the suit, and if he offers no defense, plaintiffs would have the court issue a judgement against Simonis' property or income.

The lawsuit, filed Jan. 26 in 36th Judicial District Court,

stems from Simonis' attack on John F. Fletcher and his wife Margaret, their son Gregory F. Fletcher and his wife Susan, along with the older couple's son Jeffrey.

All family members were gagged and bound with pre-cut lengths of silver duct tape while the two women were raped.

Simonis has confessed to 81 attacks from Florida to California.

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