

## Defendants in Wood case seek judge's removal, venue change

**United Press International**  
SAN ANTONIO — Defendants charged in the 1979 assassination of U.S. District Judge John Wood have filed dozens of pre-trial motions in the case, including two seeking disqualification of the presiding judge.

In a motion filed Monday, Joe Chagra, who with his brother, Jimmy, is charged with the killing, claimed that he and his brother made such profane statements about U.S. District Judge William Sessions in a tape-recorded jailhouse conversation, that he should step down from the case rather than risk his objectivity.

Joe Chagra said Sessions would have trouble remaining

impartial if the tape is allowed as evidence in the trial.

Joe Chagra's motion said the conversations will also give the jury the impression that Sessions has special knowledge of the three-year investigation that led to the indictments of Joe, Jimmy and his wife Elizabeth, and hitman Charles Harrelson and his wife Jo Ann.

Jo Ann Harrelson, already convicted of using a false name to buy the gun that killed Wood, also filed a motion asking that Sessions disqualify himself.

She said Wood and Sessions had been friends, that Sessions exhibited "shock and grief" at Wood's funeral and that Sessions had lived under guard for two years after the slaying.

Sessions scheduled a pre-trial hearing for July 19 to begin the dozens of motions filed Monday, the deadline for all the defendants except Jimmy Chagra, who has been granted an extension.

Jimmy Chagra is accused of hiring Harrelson to kill Wood before Chagra could be tried on drug charges in Wood's court. The indictment says Chagra was afraid of Wood's well-known harsh sentences for drug dealers. It says further that Joe Chagra encouraged the crime, and the two wives participated.

The courthouse where the trial is scheduled has been named after Wood, although all the defendants have asked to

have their trials moved elsewhere.

Joe Chagra said in his motion for a change of venue, filed Monday, that evidence presented at the trial might not be flattering to Wood.

"In San Antonio, the judge has been so highly honored that the presentation of such evidence would be considered prejudicial, even though relevant to the defense," the motion said.

The slew of defendants' motions also asked that their trials be severed from the others, that various counts against them be tried separately and that wire-tapped conversations be suppressed along with evidence taken in searches of their homes.

## Braniff fighting for DFW gates

**United Press International**  
FORT WORTH — Officials of Braniff International say the future of the bankrupt airline depends on whether the carrier is forced from its huge corporate offices and terminal at the Dallas-Fort Worth Airport.

However, officials of the DFW Airport Board, which has filed suit in federal bankruptcy court claiming Braniff failed to make full payments for the use of the facilities, said allowing the airline to remain jeopardizes the bond holders.

A final hearing on the suit was scheduled Tuesday.

Ernest Dean, executive director of the board, argued that, while an eviction may hurt Braniff, there is public harm resulting from tying up gate space.

"We're trying to get the facility back in order to develop some revenue and protect the bond holders," he said.

Howard Putnam said the airline's opportunity to get back on its feet depends on the carrier's ability to list the airport facilities as assets.

"Those facilities are absolutely key to our ability to fly again, though not under the name of Braniff," Putnam said.

Robert Hoffman, special counsel to the board, indicated today's proceeding will focus on the effect of the unpaid bills, more than the status of the bills.

"Braniff tendered a check for a portion of the payments that it owed, but declined to pay a majority of the payments," Hoffman said.

"The board is perfectly willing to provide any facility needed by Braniff in getting back into the airline business, but unwilling to let Braniff shut down a fourth of the airport while they reorganize," he said.

## White negotiates prison suit limits

**United Press International**  
AUSTIN — Attorney General Mark White said Tuesday that he is optimistic a settlement can be reached in a 10-year-old suit against Texas prisons if the federal government will modify its demand for private cells for inmates.

White, Gov. Bill Clements, Prison Director W.J. Estelle and members of the state Board of Corrections met in a closed, four-hour meeting Tuesday to discuss a possible settlement to the suit that resulted in a federal court order limiting inmate population and requiring other widespread changes in the prison system.

"Basically, our position is Texas will not surrender on the single-celling issue," White said. State officials and U.S. Justice Department attorneys are scheduled to discuss a possible out-of-court settlement to the suit July 7-9 in Houston.

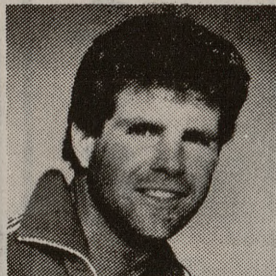
"We'll go to the negotiating table in good faith," White said.

Attorneys for the state, federal government and inmate-plaintiffs must agree on a proposed settlement before it can be presented to U.S. District Judge William Wayne Justice, who presided over the trial that resulted in his sweeping order against the Texas Department of Corrections.

Justice's order put a limit on the number of prisoners to be housed in TDC, one of the world's largest prison systems. It called for single cells for inmates, at least 60 square feet of space for inmates in dormitories, an end to inmate-guard and improved medical care.

The federal order resulted in TDC shutting its doors to new inmates for one week last month, and prison officials still are restricting the number of new inmates accepted from county jails.

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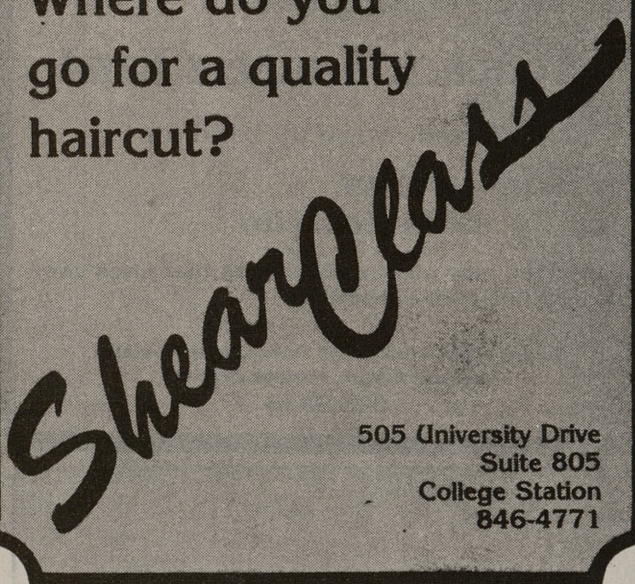
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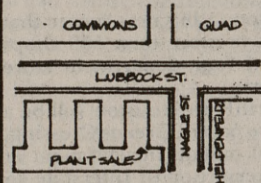
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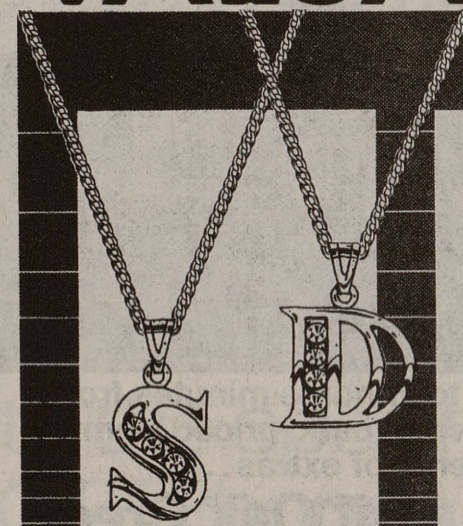
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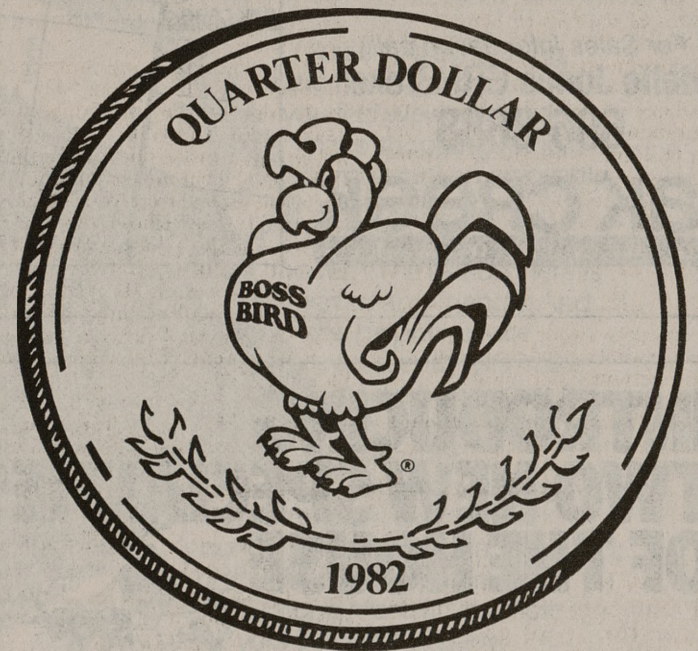
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Race sponsored by the Brazos County Kiwanis Club.

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