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Debt-collector dead; a hitman suspected

United Press International
AUSTIN — A homicide investigator said detectives were looking into a reported connection between slain debt-collector Benjamin Boyd Smith and convicted hitman Charles Harrelson, one of five suspects in the slaying of a federal judge.

The body of the former San Antonio policeman and one-time heavyweight boxer was found early Monday stuffed into the trunk of 1981 Buick automobile registered to a Houston oil company. An auto-

psy revealed he had been strangled with a rope and shot twice in the head with a .22-caliber weapon.

An Austin homicide detective, who asked not to be named, said Tuesday a tipster had provided investigators with several names of Smith's associates, including Harrelson.

Police reported no suspects in the case.

Harrelson's lawyer Tom Sharpe Jr. said he knew nothing about Smith. Federal prosecutor LeRoy Jahn declined comment

on a possible link between the two.

Smith, 54, was a contender for the state heavyweight boxing title while serving two years as a San Antonio police officer in the 1950s.

This year, Smith pleaded no contest this year to conspiracy to commit aggravated assault in a widely publicized Corpus Christi incident known as the "baseball bat case," Nueces County Prosecutor Jack Hunter said Tuesday.

Abused boy dies in coma

United Press International
LUBBOCK — A comatose boy hospitalized since July 27 with lacerations, bruises and cigarette burns allegedly inflicted by his stepfather died Wednesday without regaining consciousness, officials said.

Robert Hernandez, 2, who was placed on a total life support system after paramedics found him in a neighbor's front yard, died at 3 a.m. Wednesday from a cardiac arrest, said Don McBeath of the criminal district attorney's office.

The child's mother, Amelia

Hernandez, and stepfather Lee Roy Licon, were arraigned Wednesday on charges of first degree injury to a child and murder, McBeath said.

The district attorney requested bonds of \$50,000 each, he said.

He said the child's life support system was functioning properly when death occurred.

Licon told police in a youth had eaten rat but doctors said test results indicated no poison had been consumed.

Vermont pays \$80,000

Rapist-slayer costs state

United Press International
WATERBURY, Vt. — When accused rapist-slayer Jamie Savage turns 18 on Sept. 10, 1983, and is released from custody, it probably will have cost the state more than \$80,000 to care for him.

The bill increased this week with word Savage has been taken to a treatment center in Texas for hard-core youthful offenders and deeply troubled youths.

Officials at the Social and Rehabilitation Services Department Tuesday would not discuss Savage's whereabouts, citing state law requiring juvenile cases to be kept secret.

But sources confirmed he was taken to the Brown School, which operates seven facilities in Texas.

The bill for confining him

there until his release in 13 months probably will exceed \$50,000.

SRS officials estimated the cost of keeping a student at Waterbury — which was intended as a temporary holding facility — at about \$25,000. Savage spent 15 months there.

Savage had been confined at the juvenile detention center at the Vermont State Hospital in Waterbury since his arrest in May 1981 for an ambush attack on two 12-year-old Essex girls.

The girls were sexually assaulted, tied up, tortured, shot with BB guns and stabbed, and prosecutors called the attack "sadistic" and designed to cause as much pain as possible.

Melissa Walbridge died, but her friend survived and identified Savage and Louis Hamlin III, 16, as the assailants.

Hamlin has been convicted and sentenced to 45 years to life for rape and first degree murder.

Savage, who was only 15 at the time, could be charged only with delinquency, and must be released when he turns 18.

The crime stunned the state and prompted a special legislative session that rewrote juvenile law, so children as young as 10 can be tried as adults for certain serious crimes.

Last week, officials at the Social and Rehabilitation Services Department said Savage was still at Waterbury.

Officials had planned to send him to the Northern Tier program in Blossburg, Pa., but publicity there reportedly prompted the operators of that facility to change their mind about accepting him.

Savage was sent out of state because Vermont now has no secure detention facility for juvenile offenders.

The 1982 Legislature authorized construction of a \$10 million juvenile jail in Essex work has not yet begun project.

The Brown School is a psychiatric facility with 500 students in seven locations, three are residential treatment centers, each with a secure component, all in the Austin area.

Officials said a youth in age probably would be one of those.

The others are in houses.

A spokesman for the Brown School said it would be "unusual" for a Vermont inmate to be sent there, and Savage's background makes an unlikely candidate for school.

Social Services Director Mas Moore would not discuss Savage, but said Vermont never sent a child to the Brown School.

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Wanted: Airplane for baby gorilla

United Press International
ST. PAUL, Minn. — For want of transportation to Minnesota, a baby gorilla is still in the Texas zoo where he was born.

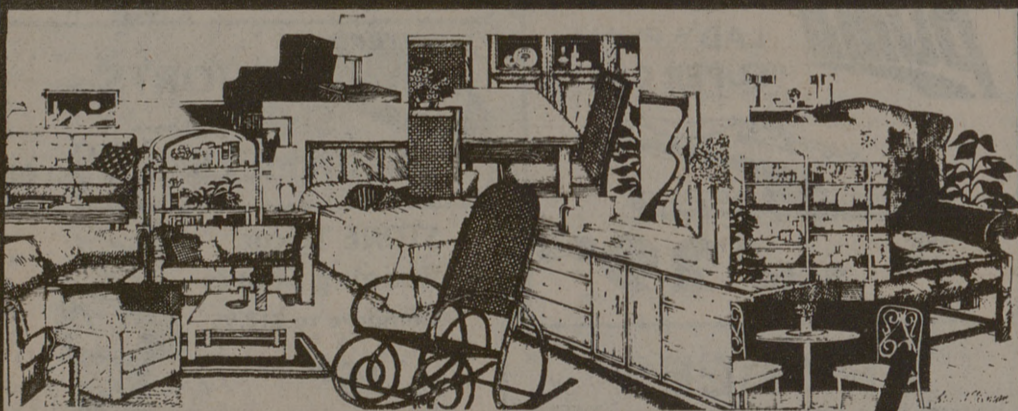
The 7-pound unnamed male western lowland gorilla was born June 28 at the Gladys Porter Zoo in Brownsville.

The breeding loan contract between Brownsville and the

Como Zoo in St. Paul, Minn., specified that the baby gorilla would become the property of the Como Zoo.

Although the baby is ready to travel to St. Paul, officials say they need some help pay for a private plane. Director John Fletcher said the zoo will help pay for fuel.

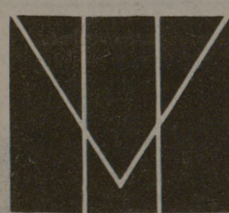
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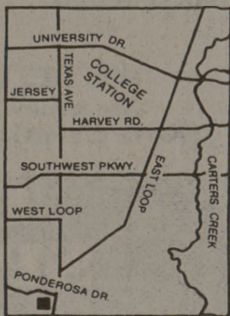


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