

# Bizarre calls brought out by Halloween, full moon

**United Press International**  
An El Paso caller named Mannie feels the tug of Vatican "witchcraft" when the moon is full while a Fort Worth caller claims microwave antennae are turning him into a human fricasse.

And west Texans report night encounters of the alien kind.

These bizarre tales and more fill pages of recent reports received by night-shift police dispatchers in Texas. Complaints seem to swell with a full moon or the advent of Halloween.

"You know what the full moon does to the tides, imagine what it can do to weak brains," said Cecil Beare, a Department of Public Safety dispatcher, manning a midnight-to-dawn switchboard in Midland. "It

brings out the crazies, the people who have nobody to talk but us to about their fears.

"And then comes Halloween and the practical jokers call in too.

"Not long ago we heard from this fellow who swore that a flying saucer was hovering a mile above his car and followed him home like a dog the 20 miles from Odessa," Beare said. "It turned out the spacecraft was the planet Saturn. We get lots of those kinds of calls these days."

Despite the influx of crank calls, the Halloween season often shows a downturn in violent criminal activity, Beare said.

"I guess people are like snakes; they hibernate when they get cold."

In El Paso, a favorite crank named Mannie keeps the switch-

boards sizzling with his weekly worries.

"Now Mannie thinks magicians in the Vatican are casting spells on his house with some sort of witchcraft," said Val Zarate, night police dispatcher. "And he also thinks Pope John Paul has bewitched Reagan."

"That's not exactly something we can send a patrol car out to check on. We just listen to him. He's an old man and it gets it out of his system."

San Antonio dispatcher Gracie Vann says a full moon always stirs the imagination of the elderly and mentally disturbed.

"We have this one old lady who is convinced that somebody is blowing electric shocks through her window," she said. "Then there's somebody who

thinks a prowler is pumping gasoline into his home."

Night callers get a bit buggy in Fort Worth.

"We've got this one fellow who tells us he has creepy, crawling things all over him and he wants police to come out and pick them off," says a late night police dispatcher.

"Then we have this guy who thinks the Arlington Police Department's radio antennae are microwaving his home, slowing frying him to death."

But Zarate admits the lonely job of manning night switchboards gets even lonelier when the cranks stop phoning.

"Sometimes we want to call up our regulars when we haven't heard from them and check to make sure they are all right."

# Wall Street wizard assists Dow's climb

**United Press International**  
NEW YORK — Stocks soared Tuesday with the Dow Jones industrial average pushing up from an 18-month high as economist Henry Kaufman kept Wall Street's rally alive with predictions of lower interest rates in the future.

The Dow Jones industrial average, which soared 26.12 points Monday to an 18-month high of 1,019.22, was ahead 6.35

points to 1,025.57 by 10:30 a.m. EDT Tuesday.

Advances led declining issues by a 9-2 margin. New York Stock Exchange volume in the first 30 minutes amounted to about 18.68 million shares.

Monday's New York Stock Exchange volume of 83,790,000 shares was up from the 80,290,000 traded last Friday, but trailed last week's record

daily average of 118 million shares.

Kaufman, influential Salmon Brothers economist, sparked early buying when he reaffirmed his belief interest rates would continue to decline because of the weak economy.

He predicted the federal funds rate will fall to the 6-7 percent range and the yield on government bonds into the 9-1 percent range.

# White worker wins bias suit

**United Press International**  
NEW YORK — A white man denied promotions and fired from his hospital guard job — although his Hispanic colleagues had worse work records — will receive more than \$6,000 in an unprecedented city discrimination ruling.

The award, announced Monday by the city's Commission on Human Rights, ended a five-year court battle and compensates Anthony Grasso, 26, of Brooklyn, for his dismissal.

"It was a straight discrimination case," said Alan Aviles, commission attorney. "The important thing was he was not Hispanic."

It was the first time the commission awarded a white worker who claimed both color and national origin discrimination, officials said.

Officials of Lutheran Medical Center, the target of Grasso's 1977 complaint, had no immediate comment.

Grasso was overlooked several times for promotion to full-time guard, Aviles said. The hospital said that was because he was not bilingual but the commission said bilingual ability was not a posted requirement.

The hospital said Grasso — part-time security guard paid \$5.40 per hour at the Brooklyn facility from June 1974 to July 1977 — was dismissed because he was away from his post twice

within a week.

The hospital said in one instance, Grasso's absence in the emergency room constituted a "life-threatening" offense, Aviles said.

But after six days of hearings before Administrative Law Judge William Kirchgaessner in January and February, it was found one misconduct complaint was unfounded.

Another charge against Grasso was less serious than complaints against several Hispanic workers with far worse work records, Aviles said.

"For example, one of the workers had been written up for being intoxicated on the job. Another had a list of about 20 misconduct violations. Neither was fired," Aviles said.

Commission Chairman Isaiah Robinson Jr. said the ruling "reminds us the protection of the Human Rights Law is available to everyone regardless of race, color or national origin — not simply to minorities as is a common misperception."

Grasso will receive \$5,735.05 in pay and interest and \$500 for mental anguish. Since fired from Lutheran Medical Center, Grasso has worked as a truck driver and as a boiler "fireman," Aviles said.

The commission did not seek to have him reinstated as a hospital guard, officials said.

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# Crash victim wins unsafe helmet suit

**United Press International**  
NEW YORK — A woman who suffered severe brain damage in a 1977 motorcycle crash won a record-breaking \$3 million settlement against the manufacturer of the helmet she was wearing.

A jury in state Supreme Court in the Bronx awarded Denise Cornier, 28, of the Bronx, the \$3 million in damages Monday.

Bell Helmet Corp. of Norwalk, Calif., which manufactured the helmet Cornier was wearing at the time of the crash, was liable for 75 percent of the damage suit.

Company officials were not immediately available for comment.

The remaining 25 percent of the \$3 million award was to be shared by the driver of the motorcycle and the car it hit in the 1977 collision.

The operator of the bike, James Spagna, also of the Bronx, was Cornier's fiance, but Finz said Spagna disappeared shortly after the accident.

During the trial, testimony showed the helmet she was wearing, a Bell SuperMagnum, had failed to pass a 1976 federal Department of Transportation test measuring its ability to absorb impact.

Cornier was thrown to the ground and struck her head. She was in a coma for 40 days and suffered severe damage, Finz said.

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Director of First Year Chemistry Programs

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