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## state

Battalion/Page 6  
December 2, 1982

# Harrelson denies charges from former fellow inmate

United Press International  
SAN ANTONIO — Charles Harrelson, undergoing continued cross-examination in his defense of murdering federal Judge John H. Wood, Wednesday denied he ever said he feared authorities would "burn me for ringing Wood's bell."

During the morning, prosecutors dealt with loose ends in the case against Harrelson, bringing up the quote from a man who lived in a cell near Harrelson in 1981.

That inmate, John Lee Spinelli, testified earlier he was returning from a shower when

he glimpsed Harrelson watching a television news report. The report was about Harrelson's stepdaughter, Teresa Starr, refusing to testify to the grand jury investigating Wood's death.

Spinelli said he overheard Harrelson say, "If she talks, they're going to burn me for ringing Wood's bell."

Harrelson claimed Spinelli had "plagiarized" the statement from a March 21, 1981, article in the Dallas Morning News. The story dealt with Harrelson's 1973 conviction for the murder-for-hire of south Texas grain dealer Sam Degelia.

The article quoted a witness in that trial, Jerry Watkins, who testified he drove the getaway car for Harrelson after Degelia was killed. Watkins was quoted as saying Harrelson returned to the car and said, "Drive! It's a damn good thing you stayed or I would have rung your bell, too."

"That's when Mr. Spinelli got the 'rung your bell' business," Harrelson testified. "It's not my phrase. It Mr. Watkins'."

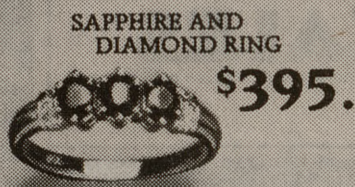
Testimony on Tuesday was a good deal more sensational, with Harrelson saying he had offered to plead guilty to mur-

dering Wood if the government would pay his family \$250,000 in cash, grant them immunity from prosecution and guarantee him conjugal visits in prison.

Harrelson, 44, is accused of murdering Wood under contract from Jimmy Chagra, a Las Vegas gambler. Chagra was to be tried on drug charges before Wood and feared a tougher than usual sentence from Wood.

Harrelson's wife JoAnn Chagra's wife Elizabeth Harrelson Chagra will be tried later.

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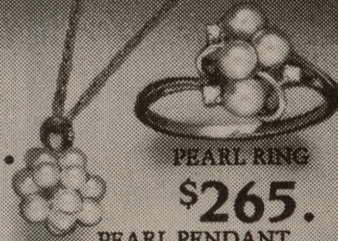


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# Four Houston robbers 'killed American dream'

United Press International  
HOUSTON — A prosecutor said four men convicted of robbing and fatally shooting a grocery store owner had also killed the American dream.

The four men were convicted of aggravated robbery and sentenced Tuesday to prison terms exceeding 75 years each.

The jury sentenced gunman Aaron Dwayne Proctor, 16, to 99 years in prison. His partners in crime, Leon O. Boyd, 20, Jonathan Lemell, 18, and Patrick Robinson, 20, were each sentenced to 75 years in prison.

Evidence in the trial showed they planned to rob and kill Wing K. Lew, 61, a neighbor-

hood grocer known as "Mr. Friendly" because of the favors he did for his customers by extending credit when they had no money for groceries.

Lew, an immigrant from China to the United States in 1940, built a successful business and paid for the education of his three children. Prosecutor Rusty Hardin said Lew had earned his golden years before he was killed.

"It is nine months and one day since these four men killed the American dream," Hardin said. "And if you read their confessions it is like instead of going to get an ice cream cone that

morning they went to do murder."

The men were originally charged with capital murder in the case, but the state decided to prosecute on aggravated robbery charges instead, which carry a maximum penalty of life in prison.

Nancy Fong, Lew's 30-year-old daughter, watched the trial and said her father had tended credit to some of the people who killed him.

"I am shocked that anyone would be so cold blooded as to do something like that," she said.

# Child welfare bill to enforce payment

United Press International  
AUSTIN — Legislation aimed at improving the enforcement of court-ordered child support payments through partial garnishment of wages was pre-filed Wednesday in the Texas Senate.

The bill's sponsor, Sen. Ray Farabee, D-Wichita Falls, said one study has shown that stricter enforcement of child support orders could save taxpayers about \$25 million annually through a reduction in welfare payments.

"By changing the enforcement techniques of child sup-

port, Texas would make delinquent parents, rather than taxpayers, responsible for the children," he said.

In addition to a partial assessment of wages, Farabee's bill would also:

- Require divorce decrees be more specific on visitation rights.
- Allow judges to use child support standards and schedules as guides in setting support awards.
- Allow counties to assess a fee on all divorce suits to generate funds for a domestic relations office.



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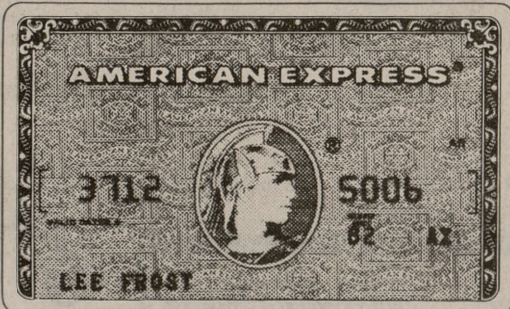
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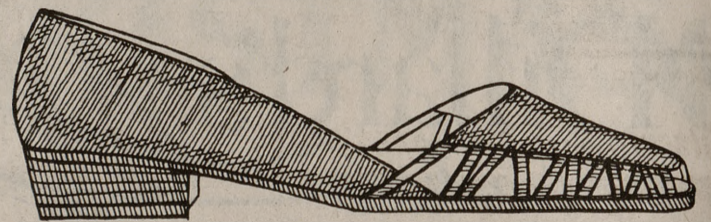
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