

# state

## Tank rupture pours acid onto freeway

United Press International  
**BEAUMONT**—The tank of a tractor-trailer truck split open on an interstate highway early today spilling several thousand gallons of hydrochloric acid onto the freeway and access roads and injuring the driver and a policeman, officials said.

The hydrochloric acid vaporized and formed a cloud of gas up to 40 yards wide and 200 yards long along Interstate 10, Beaumont police Capt. Joe Crutchfield said.

Part of U.S. 69, which was closed when the spill occurred about 12:30 a.m., was reopened

early today, police said. But southbound traffic to Port Arthur has to be rerouted.

Crutchfield said about 500 people were evacuated from Cardi's, a nearby nightclub, and the gas threatened several homes and a housing project along the freeway.

Firefighters, however, were able to neutralize the acid before it reached the residential area.

Authorities had not determined what caused the tank, which was carrying several thousand gallons of the chemical, to split as the truck traveled east on Interstate 10.

Crutchfield said the chemical covered both sides of the freeway and the access roads, prompting authorities to close a one-fourth mile stretch on both sides.

The driver, an unidentified independent trucker, was injured as well as a Beaumont policeman, who both came in contact with the chemical. The driver was severely burned on his hand and feet.

Hydrochloric acid is a highly corrosive chemical used in ore processing and in cleaning metals. Its fumes are irritable to the eyes.

## Detective says bathtub deaths are unrelated

United Press International  
**HOUSTON** — Early questioning of a suspect gave police a "stronger feeling" the deaths of three women found in bathtubs, including the wife of former Arkansas Gov. Orval Faubus, were unrelated, a detective said.

"It's a stronger feeling today than it has been but it was always strong," Detective J.C. Mosier said. "There's always a possibility until we talk to him further."

Mosier said a 29-year-old man arrested in San Antonio

Monday was brought back to Houston late Tuesday for further questioning in the deaths.

Mosier said the arrest came as a result of an anonymous tip and disputed reports the man was linked with a car seen leaving the scene of one of the killings.

"We got an anonymous tip, just I guess in answer to some of the publicity," Mosier said. "Somebody called in and said you might check this guy out. He possibly could have been involved in a murder of a woman

in one of these cases.

"We did a little checking and found out he had a burglary warrant on him early in February. We found out where he might be after doing some investigative work. We contacted the sheriff in San Antonio."

Reports had indicated the man was a suspect in the strangulation of Bertie Eakins, 74, whose battered body was found in her bathtub March 1. Ruth Kottler, 61, was found beaten and strangled in her bathtub the same day.

On Thursday Elizabeth Faubus, 44, who was awaiting finalization of divorce from the former Arkansas governor, was found dead in her bathtub. Her death was ruled asphyxiation because of some unidentified object pressed on her throat.

Although all three women were found in bathtubs in their homes and all had been separated from their husbands, there were differences in the cases. Eakins and Kottler were found clothed. Faubus' body was nude.



**No line for these tickets**  
 University Police officer Russell Kline writes out a ticket Tuesday afternoon. This lot, between the Coke Building and the YMCA Building, is packed three or four times a day.

## Mental competence tested

# Woman charged in death

United Press International  
**MARSHALL** — A jury will decide later this month whether a woman whose four infant children died is mentally competent to be tried in the beating death of her 3-month-old daughter.

District Judge Ben Z. Grant Tuesday scheduled the competency hearing for the week of March 21.

Sherry Allman, 24, is charged with murder and injury to a child in the Nov. 9, 1982, beating death of Sherry Lynn Allman. She also is charged in Kansas City, Mo., with second degree murder in the 1976 death of her 4-month-old son, Marvin Neal Allman.

A third Allman child, Joseph, died in 1978 at the age of one month, but that death has been attributed to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. A fourth child died after a premature birth.

All four deaths initially were attributed to SIDS, but an autopsy on Sherry Lynn disclosed she suffered a fractured skull, broken neck, three broken ribs and an arm injury. That inquiry reopened investigations into the other babies' deaths.

Mrs. Allman earlier underwent a court-ordered mental examination at Rusk State Hospital and was found not competent to stand trial. However, a

psychiatrist concluded she could improve if committed to Rusk for treatment.

The woman will undergo tests this week in Shreveport by her own doctors, said attorney James Wedding. He said it was likely a 12-person jury would commit Mrs. Allman to Rusk.

"Since the state's own doctors said she was incompetent, I think the state will join us in that motion (to commit her)," Wedding said. "If the jury finds her incompetent, she can be sent to Rusk."

Mrs. Allman could be committed to Rusk for not less than six months and not longer than

18 months. Wedding said. Does a then would be given the death of competency hearing. It is incompetent. If judged still incompetent, understand the charges. Her and assist in her charges would be dropped. Mrs. Allman would be sent to Rusk or another hospital. The criminally insane is determined period. He said.

"That could be a sentence," he said.

If she is found competent, state then would prosecute. Then Wedding would ask the case be dropped from Marshall because of publicity in the baby's death.

United Press International  
**SAN ANTONIO** — Rumbaugh will appeal a conviction that he committed a crime. "Just suppose your son was caught," he said.

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## Judge trades robes

United Press International  
**HOUSTON** — Even Judge Jerry McAfee's room will be seeing May 1 when the judge's long black robe is "died" red one which is the traditional color of the profession.

McAfee said although he has worn black robes for about 17 years, the traditional color of his robe was red before the Queen Anne of England in 1714. John Jay, the first justice, began the fashion of wearing a black

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