

Failed drug buy puts seven in jail

United Press International
JACKSON, Miss. — Seven men from three states have been ordered to begin serving prison terms in November for conspiring to buy a large quantity of marijuana from a government informer in 1982.

Three other men involved in the conspiracy were given suspended sentences, while two others are still battling federal conspiracy charges in court.

The 10 men pleaded guilty or no contest Tuesday during an appearance before U.S. District Judge Dan Russell. The men had agreed to make the pleas in a bargaining worked out with federal prosecutors.

"We're broke and we're going to have to accept the deal they're dishing out," said Don Pritchard of Donaldsonville, Ga.

"I feel I'm doing this in my best interest," said Raymond Banks of Double Springs, Ala., "but I don't feel I'm guilty."

The 12 defendants from Georgia, Illinois, Alabama and Canada were charged with conspiring to buy 8,500 pounds of marijuana from a federal informer in May 1982. They were originally tried in November 1982, but the trial ended in a mistrial.

when the jury reported it was hopelessly deadlocked.

Pritchard, who owned an air freight business in McAllen, Texas, and eight other defendants pleaded nolo contendere and did not contest the government's charges against them.

Assistant U.S. Attorney James Tucker said prosecutors agreed to the pleas after considering the prospect of another four-week trial and whether Russell would have instructed the jury to consider whether one of the defendants had been entrapped by the government.

The defendants claim they were lured into the deal by an unscrupulous government informer.

The marijuana was shipped to Jackson by truck from New Orleans, where it had been seized and stored by federal authorities. Tucker said the defendants thought it was coming from Belize and were waiting with \$100,000 as a down payment for the marijuana.

Pritchard, according to prosecutors, brokered the deal to distribute the marijuana to buyers from Georgia and Illinois. He pleaded guilty to conspiracy and was fined \$2,500

and sentenced to four months in the federal facility at Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery, Ala.

Banks, Marshall Adam Jonas of Georgia, and Leon Richard Sokolinski of Illinois, each received a five-year suspended sentence.

George J. Chiatello of Burmah, Ill., was given an 18-month sentence and fined \$10,000. He will serve his time at the Metropolitan Corrections Center in Chicago.

Gary Woody of Georgia was given an 18-month sentence and a \$10,000 fine. He will serve his time at the federal prison in Atlanta.

Robert Leroy Merrifield of Dothan, Ala., was sentenced to 18 months and fined \$10,000. He will serve his time at Maxwell.

James McBay of Calumette City, Ill., was given a four-month sentence and a \$2,500 fine. He will serve his time in Chicago.

Terry Douglas Henry of Ontario, Canada, was sentenced to two months and fined \$2,500. He will serve his sentence at Maxwell.

Walter Coley of Danielsville, Ga., was sentenced to two months and fined \$2,500.

Warped



Bank official pleads guilty

United Press International
WICHITA FALLS — A former bank official accused of embezzling more than \$97,000 to pay off sports bets pleaded guilty in a federal court to one count of misappropriation of bank funds, his attorney said Wednesday.

Gregory F. James, 30, of Wichita Falls, agreed to a plea bargaining arrangement Monday in which 48 other counts were dropped, said attorney Hank Anderson.

James was arraigned before U.S. District Judge Mary Lou Robinson Monday. She ordered a presentencing investigation by a probation officer and released him on a personal recognizance bond.

Federal documents accused James, who left the InterFirst Bank of Wichita Falls in May, of embezzling a total of \$97,606 in bank funds from May 28, 1982 to May 16, 1983 to pay off bets. Anderson said most of the money went to pay off bets on National Football League games.

Teachers take Mexico offices

United Press International
JUAREZ, Mexico — Protesting teachers, joined by representatives of leftwing political organizations and squatter colonists, took over the offices of the Secretariat of Education Wednesday, demanding the government provide teaching jobs to qualified personnel.

The noisy demonstration through the downtown streets of Juarez was without incident.

A number of Juarez teachers have been taking part in a hunger strike for the past week, protesting what they call the government's lack of commitment to education.

The teachers are demanding that the government offer teaching contracts to education graduates. Beginning teachers in Juarez work five hours a day and earn about \$125 a month.

The protesting teachers are alleging the government is offering some teachers two contracts, while others have no salary. Protestors said some of the teachers now on the government payroll are not qualified to teach.

Leaders in the protest movement said they will continue to occupy the offices of the education department until demands are met.

Police estimated the marchers at several hundred, about 100 of whom were teachers.

Unemployment rate goes down in Texas

United Press International
AUSTIN — Unemployment in Laredo dropped 2.1 percent in August, leading a decline in the jobless rate in nearly every Texas metropolitan area, the state employment agency reported Wednesday.

The city's rate for August was 24.1 percent, compared to 26.6 percent in July, the Texas Employment Commission said.

Meanwhile, the college town of Bryan-College Station kept its spot among the cities with the lowest jobless rate in the nation — 3.6 percent. The city's rate for July was 3.9 percent.

The overall unemployment rate for Texas in August was 7.6 percent, and 7.3 percent on a seasonally adjusted basis.

TEC labor market analyst Diane Dobie said unemploy-

ment drop in every Texas metropolitan area with the exception of Abilene and Wichita Falls, which had only minor increases, and McAllen-Pharr-Edinburg, which stayed the same.

Dobie said the decline in the jobless rates was largely attributable to seasonal factors, such as summer job seekers leaving the labor force.

Other unemployment rates for Texas cities, including last month's figure in brackets, were:

Abilene, 5.4 percent (5.2 percent); Amarillo, 4.9 percent (5.3 percent); Austin, 3.8 percent (4.3 percent); Beaumont-Port Arthur-Orange, 13.4 percent (14.2 percent); Brownsville-Harlingen-San Benito, 15 per-

cent (16.6); Corpus Christi, 11 percent (11.7 percent); Dallas-Fort Worth, 4.9 percent (5.4 percent); El Paso, 10.8 percent (12.3 percent); Galveston-Texas City, 11.9 (12.4 percent); Houston, 9 percent (9.8 percent); Killean-Temple, 5.1 percent (5.5 percent); Longview-Marshall, 11 percent (11.8 percent); Lubbock, 6.2 percent (7.1 percent); McAllen-Pharr-Edinburg, 21.1 percent (21.1 percent); Midland, 5.8 percent (6.2 percent); Odessa, 8.8 percent (9.5 percent); San Angelo, 5 percent (5.4 percent); San Antonio, 5.7 percent (6.2 percent); Sherman-Denison, 6.8 percent (7.7 percent); Tyler, 6 percent (6.8 percent); Victoria, 9.4 percent (10.2 percent); Waco, 5 percent (5.5 percent); Wichita Falls, 5.7 percent (6.2 percent).

2 face charges for Hughes will

United Press International
LOS ANGELES — An executive and a fugitive face felony charges for allegedly drawing up and trying to pass off as genuine a phony will from the late billionaire Howard Hughes, District Attorney Robert Philibosian said Wednesday.

Arrest warrants have been issued for Martha Jo Graves, 54, who was last known to be living in Hollywood, and Harold Mallet, 52, of Canyon Country, an airline executive.

District Attorney's office spokesman Al Albergate said Mallet is expected to surrender Friday in Municipal Court.

A criminal complaint filed by the District Attorney's office alleges Graves prepared a five-page document entitled, "Last Will and Testament" with the

forged signature of Hughes. Evidence shows Mallet signed his name as a witness on the last page of the document, Philibosian said.

Graves claims she found the will in 1981 among the papers of attorney Earl Hightower, who died in 1974. She was his secretary and co-executor of his estate.

The forged will leaves 20 percent of the Hughes property to the Acme Mining Company, an inactive corporation formed by Hightower and headed by Graves.

Graves has been charged with conspiracy to commit grand theft and forgery, offering and preparing false evidence and perjury. Mallet was charged with all the same counts except offering false evidence.

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