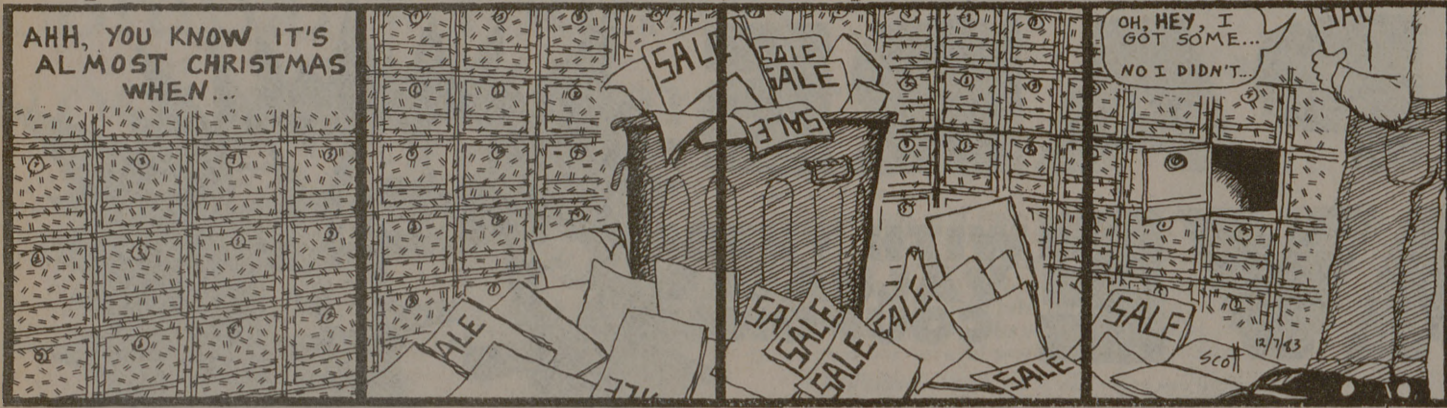


Warped

by Scott McCullar



Move Yourself, All Your Stuff, And Save, Too!

Judge accepts plea bargains

United Press International HOUSTON — A judge Tuesday interrupted the latest San Jacinto County civil rights conspiracy trial to accept bargained

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guilty pleas from three of the four defendants.

Prosecutors, who had spent a week putting on evidence in the case, claimed the four conspired to stop black, "hippy" and Louisiana motorists, arrest them on false charges and take illegal bond fees, guns and drugs for personal use.

Bail bondsman Herbert Atwood, 53, pleaded guilty to a reduced charge of failing to report a felony. Bondsman James Browder, 43, pleaded guilty to a reduced charge of aiding in covering up a felony.

Former deputy Gary Parker, 24, son of convicted ex-Sheriff James "Humpy" Parker, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to violate the civil rights of motorists on U.S. 59, including unjustified strip-searches of men and women.

All other charges against the three were dismissed. U.S. District Judge Robert O'Connor scheduled sentencing for all three Feb. 17.

Atwood faces up to three years in prison and a \$500 fine. The most Browder could receive would be five years in prison and a \$5,000 fine. Parker could receive up to 10 years in prison and a \$10,000 fine.

The other defendant who went to trial Nov. 28, former deputy Robert Rice, 25, did not make a deal with the government to plead guilty so his case is still pending.

The 47-year-old ex-sheriff was to have gone to trial with the three. He was named in the same indictment, but he was undergoing psychiatric evaluation in connection with an earlier water-torture conviction so his case was postponed.

Alien flees enslaver, testifies in lawsuit

United Press International TYLER — A Mexican testified Tuesday he and 13 other illegal aliens fled last February from the back of a pickup truck driven by a rifle-toting East Texan who had enslaved them on a tree farm.

Steven Crawford, 20, of Center and Randall Waggoner, 22, of Nacogdoches went on trial Monday in federal court on 24 counts of conspiracy, transporting illegal aliens and involuntary servitude.

A jury of three women and nine men is hearing the case in U.S. district Judge William Steger's courtroom. The trial is expected to last about a week.

Julio Martinez Rios testified that he and 13 other men were held at Crawford's farm for four days with little food and none of the \$25 a day they had been promised for planting pine seedlings.

He said they jumped from

the back of Waggoner's pickup last February in Center but were forced back in a riflepoint by Waggoner. Moments later when the truck stopped at a red light, the aliens again leaped out and ran to nearby stores where they got help.

Antonio Arias Cardoso, 26, testified Monday that Waggoner put a gun to his head when he arrived at Crawford's farm Feb. 12 and told Arias he would kill him if he tried to escape.

Jose Armando Gonzalez, 29, of Rock Springs near the Texas-Mexico border testified Monday that he hid the aliens in a chicken coop for two or three days until Waggoner and Crawford picked them up in a covered trailer.

Gonzalez said Crawford paid him \$50 for each alien. Gonzalez pleaded guilty in October to conspiracy to transport illegal aliens and one count of transporting aliens and will be sentenced when the trial concludes.

Crawford and Waggoner face maximum penalties if convicted of five years in jail and a \$10,000 fine for the conspiracy and five years and a \$2,000 fine for each of the 12 counts of transporting aliens and five years and a \$5,000 fine for each of the counts of involuntary servitude.

Defense attorneys William Holcomb and Jeff Bessie attacked the federal government for allowing the aliens to remain in the United States for several months after their escape and letting them work several jobs near Houston and the Fort Worth-Dallas area.

Both Arias and Martinez again living in Mexico after turned for the trial on temporary visas. Rex Burns of the migration and Naturalization Service in Houston said all aliens involved would be deported after the trial.

Women 'destabilizing'

Honduras off limits

United Press International NEW ORLEANS — Ninety-five religious women were prevented from traveling to Honduras for a four-day peace vigil at U.S. military bases because they might destabilize conditions in the country, a Honduran official said Tuesday.

The women could have become victims of "parties trying to destabilize the government," said Consul General Francisco Lopez-Reyes.

"A group of this size, if they go to a military post and something does happen to them, you know the government will be blamed," he said. "This is perhaps for their own safety."

Lopez-Reyes said the women might themselves be destabilizing elements, though "they claim to be religious and they want love and peace."

The women — Protestant,

Catholic and Jewish leaders from throughout the U.S. and Canada — had planned to travel to Honduras to protest what they called growing U.S. intervention in Latin America.

Lopez-Reyes said the women were banned under a recently approved decree stating that religious "groups of any denomination must secure permission from the foreign ministry before entering Honduras."

"They cannot travel," he said. "They cannot go. That's all there is to it. My instructions are that definitely these people are not welcome to visit Honduras right now."

The women, who were not permitted to board a SAHSA airline bound for the Honduran capital of Tegucigalpa, said they hoped to relocate their protest at an army base in the southern U.S.

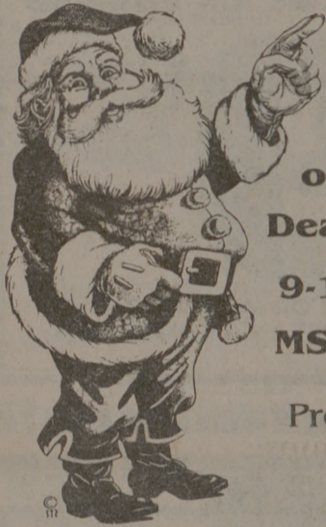
"We are not done," said Nancy Golden. "We feel we must carry this message to the Honduran people."

Forty-five other women planned to participate in a "pilgrimage for peace" but were refused permission to leave Miami when it landed in Tegucigalpa Monday after a flight from Miami.

Golden said she hoped other women from the Miami area could join the New Orleans contingent to protest at a military base such as Georgia's Fort Benning or Fort Bragg in Texas.

Twenty of the women marooned in New Orleans Tuesday with Lopez-Reyes said "if the Honduran government had nothing to fear, would have welcomed us."

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