

Father found guilty of murdering own son

United Press International
EL PASO — U.S. District Court Judge Harry Lee Hudspeth found Keith Bryan Webb guilty of murdering his six-year-old son Thursday.

Webb, who acted as his own attorney and requested a trial without a jury, stood passively as Hudspeth delivered his verdict of second-degree murder. Webb will be sentenced Feb. 24, Hudspeth said, and could receive a term of life in prison.

Hudspeth said the government proved that Webb killed Steven Marcel Wilson by banging his head against a wall and immersing him in a tub of scalding water.

Webb showed no emotion and did not say anything in the courtroom after the verdict was read. But as he was being led back to the County Jail by federal marshals, he told a reporter, "my constitutional rights were violated."

Webb's wife Robin also claimed her husband's rights were violated. "The judge already had his mind made up before the trial was over," she

said, outside the courtroom. Hudspeth heard three days of testimony during the trial. During Wednesday's final arguments, Assistant U.S. Attorney Ricardo Gonzalez urged that the court find Webb guilty based on Webb's admissions to federal agents that he killed his son and buried him in the desert.

Webb argued that the government did not prove that he killed his son. According to government witnesses, Webb admitted to striking the boy's head against a wall in the Fort Bliss house in which he lived with Army Spec. 4 June Wilson Webb.

He later placed the boy in hot water, agents said, causing the boy's skin to blister and peel. The boy became listless and finally died, agents testified. Webb said in his final argument that expert witnesses could not determine what killed the boy and could not positively identify the body they examined.

"No cause of death was ever determined," Webb said. "The anthropologist said he could not testify as to the cause of death, as to any burns or any fracture on the back of the head," Webb said, referring to Walter Birkby, an Arizona anthropologist who testified earlier.

Webb also argued that a statement given by his wife Robin was made under stress and involuntarily.

"My constitutional rights will be violated if I'm convicted based on an involuntary statement," he told the court. "It would be exploitation and would disbalance the scales of justice."

Earlier Wednesday afternoon, a psychiatrist was recalled to the stand by Webb. Dr. Harry Sisby is deputy commander of William Beaumont Army Medical Center. He talked Webb down from a radio tower that Webb had fled to and sat on top of after hearing the allegations against him on Sept. 6.

Relatives of missing crew meet with officials, media

United Press International
HOUSTON — Relatives of some of the 81 crew members missing from an oil drilling ship which sank between China and Vietnam Oct. 25 told investigators Thursday the crew's letters mentioned bad conditions aboard ship.

"We told them that from our sons, husbands and so on the maintenance on that ship was bad, that it was a danged disaster and turnover of personnel was out of sight," said Douglas Pierce, an Austin lawyer whose son, John, was aboard.

Coast Guard Capt. Walter McDougall, heading a fact-finding panel of three Coast Guard officers and two National Transportation Safety Board in-

vestigators, led the meeting and excluded the media.

Afterward, family members told reporters the panel sought knowledge of crew members' communications home, information that might help with the panel's responsibility — explaining the accident.

They said the officials also listened to family questions about the possibility of survivors, but Michelle Sullivan of Evergreen, Colo., wife of Canadian crew member Greg Sullivan, said there were no new answers.

Divers on the vessel, which sank during Typhoon Lex Oct. 25, said lifeboats were gone. Although the vessel has not been searched completely, no bodies have yet been found.

There has been speculation survivors in life boats might have reached the Vietnam coast 90 miles to the west, but Vietnam said it has no information. Pierce has offered a \$100,000 reward for information leading to survivors.

"I think there's going to be hope until they find a body," Sullivan said. "That's all I've got," added Gerda Reed of San Diego, Calif., wife of drilling su-

pervisor Clarence Reed, an ARCO China Ltd. employee.

The ship, owned by Global Marine Inc. of Houston, was drilling an exploratory well for ARCO China when it sank with a mixed crew of 37 Americans, 35 Chinese, four British, two Singaporean, one Australian and one Filipino.

After the meeting, some relatives said the session was meaningless.

A penny saved is \$1,200?

United Press International
AUSTIN — Eugene Villareal of Austin finally decided Thursday it was time to cash in his two-year savings of pennies — all \$1,200 worth.

Villareal lugged 25 one-gallon jars of pennies into Inter-First Bank and asked to deposit them in his savings account.

"I called the bank yesterday to make sure they wouldn't charge me for counting them," the 35-year-old caterer said. "I guess they were a little surprised."

The exact tally of the pennies will not be known until the bank counts the coins later with a machine, but Villareal estimated there were about 120,000 coins.



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