



Burglar bars trap man, two sons in home blaze

United Press International
SAN ANTONIO — A fire today killed a man and his two young sons, who were trapped in their burning home by burglar bars that failed to release from the inside.
 Benedict Keller, 35, a technical sergeant at Lackland Air Force Base, died before noon today at Wilford Hall Medical Center.
 His sons, 2-year-old Gregory and 6-year-old Benedict Jr.,

were pronounced dead on arrival at the hospital.
 Diana Keller, wife and mother of the victims, was at work when the morning fire erupted.
 Neighbors said they heard Keller's screams for help from a back bedroom but were unable to pry the bars off from the outside. Two Bexar County sheriff's deputies finally pried the bars off and pulled the victims out through the window.
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deputies finally pried the bars off and pulled the victims out through the window.
 The cause of the fire, which broke out about 9 a.m., was still unknown. Preliminary damage estimates to the house were placed at \$100,000.
 Investigators said they were trying to determine whether the burglar bars were improperly installed or if Keller was too weakened by smoke to release them.

Officer testifies that Geter implicated friend in case

United Press International
DALLAS — A Plano policeman testified Thursday that he implicated Lenell Geter in a string of robberies in the Dallas area, said he talked to Geter after his arrest in Greenville.

"I do not recall exactly what I asked him about my robberies, but he (Geter) said something to the effect he had no involvement and we needed to look at Williams," Cochrane said under examination by Edwin Sigel, one of Geter's attorneys.

to make Geter and five other black South Carolina men employed in Greenville suspects in a string of robberies in the Dallas area, said he talked to Geter after his arrest in Greenville.

will show there was a conspiracy among law officials to pin the robberies on the South Carolina engineers, that the prosecution did not reveal evidence favorable to the defense at Geter's previous trial and that Geter was subjected to unfair and suggestive photo lineups and victimized through police surveillance of his residence long before any robberies were committed.

On cross-examination by Assistant District Attorney Norman Kinne who sought to dispell the conspiracy theory, Cochrane said he was not part of any conspiracy to get Geter.

District Judge John Ovard is hearing a defense motion to dismiss the entire case on an unprecedented motion filed "in the interest of justice."

Geter was arrested Aug. 24, 1982, in Greenville for a fast-food restaurant armed robbery in the Dallas suburb of Garland. He was eventually sentenced to life in prison.

Geter was later freed on bond and ordered to stand trial again amid national publicity to his charges that the conviction was the result of a racist judicial system and sloppy and unfair investigation by police agencies in the area.

Plano officer Gary Cochrane, who is accused by the defense of being part of an effort by police

Questioned further by Sigel, who was trying to show that Geter only identified Williams as his roommate because Cochrane had Williams' picture, Cochrane said:

"There is a possibility something may have been lost in translation. ... It was my understanding Geter was trying to implicate Williams. ... It is possible I might have misunderstood."

Cochrane also said that during photo lineups he later conducted, witnesses to the three robberies in his jurisdiction cleared both Williams and Geter.

The defense has said that it

Mardi Gras begins early in capitol

United Press International
WASHINGTON — Thousands of Mardi Gras revelers Thursday began their 38th annual "non-stop, three-day party" in Washington's festive forerunner of the legendary carnival season beginning next weekend in New Orleans.

Thirty festival queens with titles like "Miss Crawfish" and "Miss Swine" are among the thousands of Louisiana residents and officials who have taken over a downtown hotel as official headquarters for the three-day celebration that culminates in Saturday night's gala ball hosted by a secret society called The Mystick Krewe of Louisiana.

Began 38 years ago "just to give Washington a taste of Louisiana celebrations," this year's colorful festivities are chaired by Rep. Gillis Long, D-La.

"The guests at all three events are in the thousands, probably between 2,000 and 3,000 people, primarily Louisianians," said Jean Smith, a Long aide. "So help me, half the state lives up here."

"Louisiana Gov.-elect Edwin Edwards, Lt. Gov. Bobby Freeman and other state officials are here," she said. "There will be a

lot of state legislators, mayors and public officials of all sorts.

"Just everybody, really. I don't know how they run the state during Washington Mardi Gras."

New Orleans' famed carnival season, which annually draws more than a million people for what has been dubbed the world's largest free party, begins Feb. 26 and lasts through Fat Tuesday, March 6, the last day of revelry before Lent begins.

But Louisianians love a party and politics so thousands of them travel north for the invitation-only, Washington version of Mardi Gras.

"There are private parties constantly. It's a three-day non-stop party. There are all manner of receptions cocktail parties before and after every event. There also are a lot of hospitality suites," Smith said.

The official festivities began Thursday with a luncheon with Mardi Gras king Crawford Bishop of St. Amant, La., members of the Louisiana congressional delegation and the 30 festival queens and 30 princesses.

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