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Excessive lead found in blood

United Press International

DALLAS — Health officials have tested more than 100 children who live near a lead smelter and have found that a quarter of them, including a toddler hospitalized for lead poisoning, have excess lead in their blood.

The survey, conducted by the city's Health and Human Services Department, examined children living near the Dixie Metals smelter in south Dallas and found that 26 of 102 children ages 6 years and younger had elevated lead levels.

Twenty-two-month-old Patricia Flores, who had been seen eating dirt in her front yard near the smelter, was identified during the survey as an "urgent-risk" case and immediately hospitalized in Parkland Memorial Hospital. She was listed in fair condition Wednesday.

The survey also identified four other children as moderate to high risk cases, HHS official Margo Branscomb said.

The survey results came at the same time state District Judge Dee Brown Walker of Dallas issued a temporary restraining order prohibiting the opening of a second lead smelter in the city. He said the issue has not been ef-

fectively addressed. City officials contend the facility does not comply with city zoning ordinances.

"I don't know why they (Murmur Corp.) want to get that thing started out there," Walker said Tuesday. "It seems like it would lead to another mess."

The restraining order was signed over the protest of Murmur officials who were authorized Monday by state District Judge Nathan Hecht to open the plant.

Murmur bought the giant smelter in west Dallas from RSR Corp. in May for \$25,000 and has invested \$400,000 in pollution-control equipment to comply with a federal order to clean up the smelter and to pay for the removal of lead-contaminated soil nearby.

Thomas Kurt, a member of the city environmental health commission, said he was not convinced the lead levels were linked to the smelter.

"I wouldn't necessarily become an alarmist at the information," he said. "There are other factors to be looked into."

He noted that many Hispanic families in the area use a popular Mexican folk remedy that contains a high level of lead oxides.

Accused abductors in court

United Press International

AMSTERDAM, Netherlands — Three men accused of kidnapping the Dutch beer magnate Freddie Heineken and extorting an \$11 million ransom went on trial Wednesday.

Heineken family members, relatives of the defendants and curious onlookers crowded into a courtroom rigged with bullet-proof glass screens to hear testimonies of the months of meticulous planning behind the abduction of one of Europe's richest men.

Heineken, the 60-year-old head of the world's fourth largest brewery, was kidnapped at gunpoint Nov. 9 outside his Amsterdam office. His driver, Ab Doderer, 58, also was kidnapped.

The pair was taken to an isolated timber warehouse, where they were chained to the walls of specially built, sound-proof cells for 21 days. Heineken and Doderer were found by police 48 hours after the brewery paid a ransom estimated at \$11 million.

The three Dutch defendants are Jan Boellard, 35; Martin Erkamps, 21; and Frans Meijer, 30. They were arrested in a nationwide manhunt, during which police recovered about \$9 million of the ransom. The remainder is still missing.

Under Dutch law, there are no jury trials and defendants are not asked to plead guilty or not guilty. If convicted, however, the three could face jail sentences of up to 16 years.

Presiding Judge G. Bode opened the trial with a summary of the case and then called Erkamps the stand as the first of the three defendants to testify. Erkamps gave a statement detailing his side of the story before defense and prosecution arguments.

Erkamps said preparations began five months before the kidnapping, but in the beginning he was unaware of the specific nature of the crime being planned.

"I had no idea the whole time that all this planning was for a kidnapping," Erkamps said. "I reckoned we were going to do a bank job or something like that."

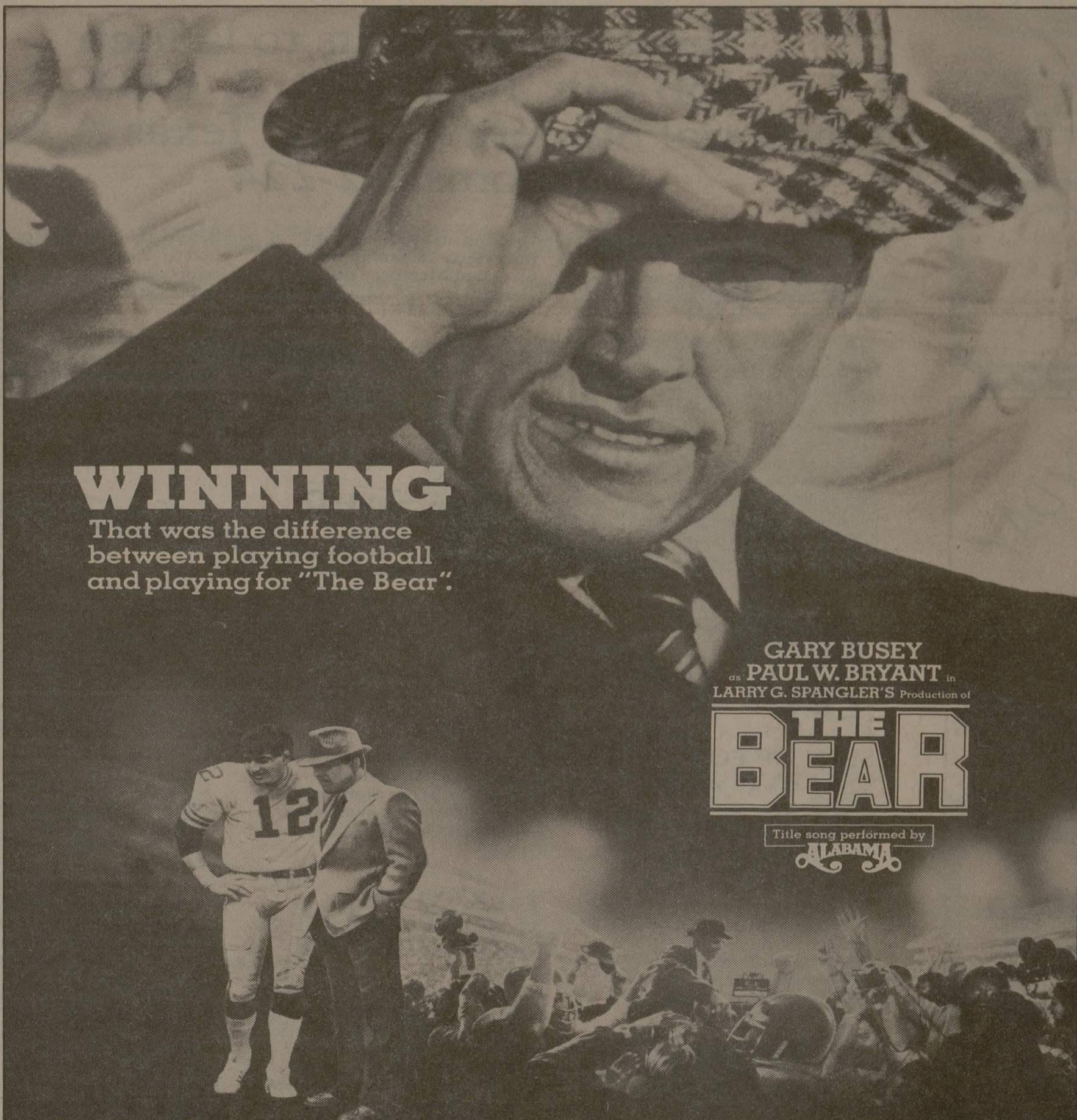
Erkamps said he was promised about \$300,000 for stealing automobiles and for helping to purchase West German intercoms that he used in the unheated cells in which Heineken and Doderer were imprisoned.

After Erkamps discovered the crime involved a kidnapping, he realized "there was just no going back at that stage."

He said he helped take care of two captives after the abduction.

"I brought them food, which I cooked myself every morning every evening," Erkamps said. "When I had to speak to them, I spoke in German to hide my identity. I had my head covered so they could not see my face."

Court officials said Heineken and his driver were not expected to appear in the trial.



WINNING

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