

Robbers hit hotel in Bryan

By Jade Boyd
Reporter

Three men, one of whom used a coat to conceal what may have been a gun, robbed the Bryan Holiday Inn at 2300 Texas Ave. Wednesday night, taking an undisclosed amount of cash from the front desk cashier.

Detective Sgt. Elvin Walker confirmed that the robbery occurred shortly after 10 p.m. Wednesday night.

The night clerk, a Texas A&M student, said one of the robbers had what appeared to be a gun concealed under a coat. The student described the robbery as follows:

"At about 9:45 p.m., three men entered the hotel and asked for change to use the lobby telephone. They apparently used the telephone and left. Ten minutes later they re-entered the lobby and asked the clerk for more change. After the register was opened, one of the men raised the weapon while another demanded money.

"At the first instant I was more or less stunned," the clerk said. "People come in and out of the hotel all the time. It's not uncommon for people to come in off the street and use the phone. I was not suspicious of them when they walked in so it was totally unexpected. But, when they said 'Give me your money,' I realized it was very much for real.

"I just kind of stood there and they said 'Give me your money' again. At that point, the second one leaned over the counter and grabbed the money out of the register."

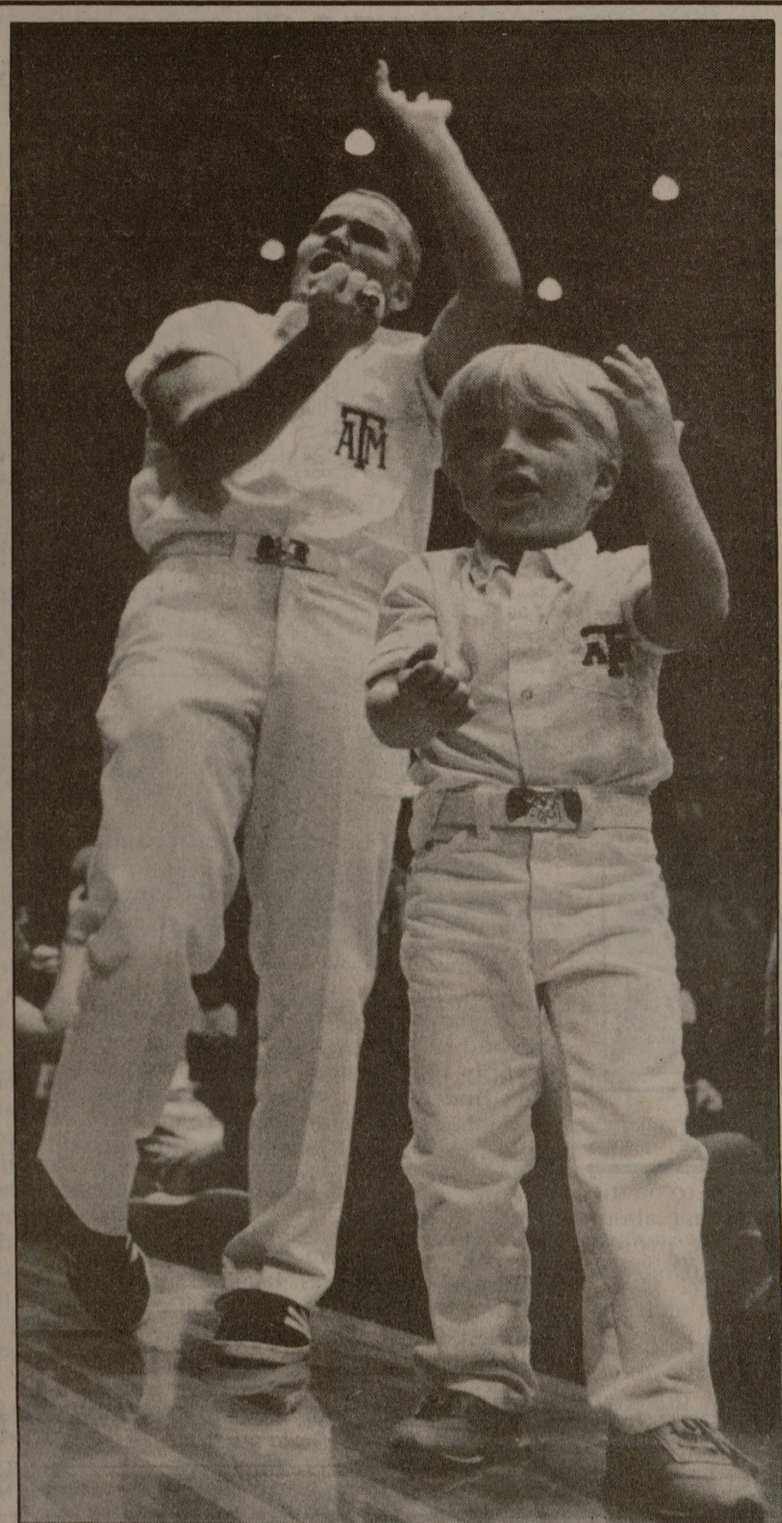
After the men left, the clerk called police. Investigators from the Bryan Police Department arrived within five minutes, the clerk said.

Walker said he received a good description of the robbers from the clerk, but police are unsure at this point what charges will be filed if an arrest is made.

"From the first day I started working at hotels I knew this was possible," said the clerk, who has worked at the Holiday Inn for less than a month.

He said the robbery would not cause him to quit his job.

"It's no big deal," he said. "But I'll be more leery of people as they come in for a while."



Class of '99?

Tommy Kunkleman lends a hand to yell leader Marty Holmes during one of Texas A&M's basketball games. Kunkleman has been leading yells at volleyball and basketball games throughout the year.

Photo by Chris Lane

Judge: Error may lead to reversal in 7-11 case

By Curtis L. Culberson
Staff Writer

An error in the charges presented to the jury hearing the case against the two surviving suspects of the October attempted robbery of a 7-Eleven store may provide grounds for a reversal, District Court Judge John Delaney said Thursday.

Felix Orta, 32, of College Station, and Crispin Morales, 26, of Bryan, were found guilty of three counts of aggravated robbery by a jury Wednesday evening after three hours of deliberation. But the

charges presented the jury before deliberation were incomplete.

The phrase "... with intent to maintain and control the property" is part of the official charge of aggravated robbery and it was left out of the formal charges given jurors before deliberation, Delaney said.

Delaney said he found the mistake Wednesday night while reviewing the case after the guilty verdict had been reached.

After consultation with the attorneys and other law experts Thursday morning, it was decided that de-

fense attorney William W. Vance's objection about the incomplete charges could get an appellate court to set aside the decision and retry the case.

Despite another objection by Vance, Judge Delaney re-presented the corrected charges to the jury Thursday morning and had them re-decide the case, instructing them to disregard the first verdict.

"This has never been done before in the state of Texas," Vance said.

After about 20 minutes of deliberation the jury again found Orta and

Morales guilty of three counts of aggravated robbery.

The jury then deliberated six hours on the punishment of the defendants before sentencing Orta to life imprisonment for each of the three counts of aggravated robbery. Morales was sentenced to 36 years imprisonment for each of the three counts.

Orta and Morales were injured and another suspect killed on Oct. 22 when police arrived at the 7-

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Senate report tracks funds for arms deal

Profits traced to concealed island account

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate Intelligence Committee has traced Iranian arms sales profits, apparently intended for Nicaragua's Contra rebels, to a secret Cayman Islands bank account, the panel's chairman said Thursday.

But Sen. David Boren said a newly written committee report has not yet determined "the ultimate resting place of this money."

The report, released Thursday night, said information regarding the flow of money was in part "based on sources of unknown reliability," whose statements could not be independently verified by the committee.

Boren said the report includes no direct evidence that would state that President Reagan knew of the diversion or that he directed the diversion of funds to the Contras.

"You cannot finally resolve that question when you don't have the testimony of North and Poindexter and others," Boren said of two departed administration figures, Vice Adm. John M. Poindexter and Lt. Col. Oliver L. North.

Across the Capitol, sources said the House panel investigating the Iran-Contra connection had notified independent counsel Lawrence Walsh that it might have to make a decision on granting limited immunity to witnesses sooner than he wishes.

These sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the panel notified Walsh of its feelings in a letter.

"The House has to make its own judgment," said one source, noting that while Walsh may take many months to complete his work, the committee's charter expires in October.

Walsh had earlier written the panel that a grant of limited immunity might create barriers to possible prosecution. Poindexter and North have refused to answer questions, citing their constitutional rights against self-incrimination.

Boren said the Senate Intelligence Committee report reveals that Reagan met a number of times with North, then a deputy on the National Security Council staff, generally with others present.

The White House denied last year

that Reagan ever met alone with North over the past two years.

Of the Iran-Contra money connection, Boren said: "We take it one more step, the Cayman Islands account. The creation of that, of course, is tied to the ultimate beneficiary being in some way the Contras. But in terms of showing the final trail in terms that absolutely nail down the fact that they received the funds, no."

In the past the Contras have used Cayman Island bank accounts — protected by bank secrecy laws in that small island nation — for transfers of funds to pay for military operations in their war against the left-

ist Sandinista government in Managua.

The report said that after the committee completed its initial investigation last Nov. 28, the panel received information "indicating that profits from Iranian arms sales were deposited in account(s) in a Swiss bank called Credit Fiduciare Services (CFS) and that such accounts were opened and/or controlled by Richard Secord, Thomas Clines and Theodore Shackley. CFS then transferred money to its subsidiaries in Grand Cayman which disbursed it to the Nicaraguan resistance."

Secord, Clines and Shackley are

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Biotech funding means foothold in med center

By Robert Morris
Staff Writer

By appropriating funds for the preliminary design of the Institute of Biosciences and Technology, the Texas A&M Board of Regents has taken the initial step toward giving the University a valuable foothold into the Texas Medical Center in Houston.

In a written project justification prepared for the Board, Dr. Eugene Sander, deputy chancellor for biotechnology development, said the institute will provide the University with a presence both in the world's largest medical center and in Houston, the largest city in Texas.

The regents' Planning and Building Committee Sunday approved a \$550,000 architectural contract for the institute.

The Bernard Johnson architectural engineering firm received the contract.

The building is slated to be built on the parking lot and tennis court areas next to the landmark Shamrock Hilton Hotel, purchased by the Texas Medical Center in late 1985.

Pending approval by the TMC, construction will begin by May 1988.

The building is scheduled to open two years later.

Gerald Hickman, vice president of the TMC, said with the purchase of the hotel property, land had become available for an expansion.

"Since the acquisition of the land, we were approached by a number of institutions, one of which was Texas A&M," Hickman said.

He said this process began in late 1985 to early 1986.

While the final agreement has not been signed, Hickman said it is under development.

He said he anticipates no problems in coming to terms with the University.

Sander said the \$24 million research center, which will be paid for with money from bond sales, will provide an important interface between similar research at A&M and the various parts of the Texas Medical Center.

The center also will provide scientific leadership and support for both new and established Texas industries in biotechnology and support for outreach programs to Texas citizens in areas such as how nutrition relates to health.

The Texas Medical Center covers 550 acres and is made up of 37 separate institutions.

To become part of the center complex, an institution has to be non-profit and must be devoted to patient care, medical research or medical education, Hickman said.

"When we buy land, such as the property the hotel stands on, that land will be parceled out free of charge to those institutions that qualify under the terms given, and that would obviously make a great contribution to the overall system," Hickman said.

He said the land the University will occupy falls under those terms. Sander said, "The key to success will be in establishing internationally recognized scientific excellence in six to nine areas that will complement research both at the University and the Texas Medical Center."

"These scientific areas will address major scientific problems relative to biotechnology using a select group of chemists, biochemists, biophysicists, and molecular geneticists organized to address major scientific problems, rather than support specific disciplines."

"Another important function of the institute will be to provide opportunities for College Station-based scientists in biotechnology to interact with their counterparts in the Texas Medical Center."

The tie between students and the research center will largely be through graduate programs, Sander said.

"In addition to the research activities, which will be highly supportive of the biotechnology industry in Texas," Sander said, "it is believed that the institute will give graduate students new and exciting opportunities in the sciences that support biotechnology."

Sander said that at this time he has no way of knowing what the institute's budget would be.

However, he said he thinks the center will receive strong support from the Houston business community.

Sander said he thinks that the combination of research capabilities available will allow all involved to be more competitive for support from federal agencies, the private sector and private foundations.

Hickman said he feels both the Houston business community and the city government of Houston are in full support of the proposal.

Group seeks to restore university funding

By Amy Couvillon
Staff Writer

A recently formed political action committee for higher education is asking Texas A&M and other public universities in Texas for financial contributions.

University of Texas Board of Regents Chairman Jess Hay, who is the leader of the Higher Education Legislative PAC, said the main objective of the committee right now is to restore state funding for universities to at least 1985 levels. He has said the cuts made in the 1986 special sessions reflect legislators' lack of commitment to higher education.

A legislative political action committee is a registered special-interest group formed for the purpose of making financial contributions to political candidates.

The higher education PAC will contribute on a non-partisan basis to legislators who "clearly and unequivocally" support Texas higher education, Hay said.

Hay said he has gotten a good response from public universities around the state, as well as from business leaders and other benefactors of higher education.

"The support has been very gratifying to date," said Hay, who is also

the chairman and chief executive officer of Lomas & Nettleton Financial Corp. of Dallas. "There is a very strong and large body of support."

At A&M, Arthur Blair, assistant to President Frank E. Vandiver, said the president, along with members of the Board of Regents who serve on the PAC, has sent letters of information to administrators on campus as well as to the Faculty Senate and the Association of Former Students.

"The chairman of the A&M Board of Regents, working closely with the chairman of the UT Board of Regents, is disseminating information and asking for our support," Blair said.

"Each element within the system, I would assume, is doing the same thing that A&M is doing," Blair said.

DeWayne Wommack, treasurer of the higher education PAC, said, "Higher education has got to be a priority in order for the state to be competitive — in achieving good people in the teaching profession as well as being competitive in research."

"All those reasons for supporting higher education are reasons for

supporting a higher education PAC."

Bill C. Presnal, executive secretary for the A&M Board of Regents and vice chancellor for state affairs, agreed.

"The idea is to promote higher education," Presnal said. "It allows the public, the individual, to partici-

"All those reasons for supporting higher education are reasons for supporting a higher education PAC."

— DeWayne Wommack, PAC treasurer.

pate in a way that he can be heard."

Blair said that although Vandiver is in the process of sending a letter to the former students and some of the senior staff members, the president has left the decision as to how to approach A&M faculty up to the Faculty Senate.

"In dealing with the faculty themselves," Blair said, "Dr. Vandiver thought it would be more appropriate for the Faculty Senate — which really represents the faculty

— to explain and ask the faculty if they would want to support it."

At its Jan. 19 meeting, the Faculty Senate received a letter from the office of the president asking for support for the PAC.

"I hope you can look favorably on this — time presses!" Vandiver said in a Jan. 14 memo to Dr. Sam Black, the Senate's speaker.

The Senate agreed to postpone consideration of the higher education PAC — putting it on the Feb. 9 agenda — since most of the senators agreed that they wanted more information about the PAC before they endorsed it.

But the Senate also authorized its executive committee to research the PAC and compose an appropriate letter that would inform the faculty and give them the opportunity to contribute.

The Faculty Senate executive committee is still in the process of gathering information, and it has not yet sent out a letter, said Dr. Leonard Ponder, the Senate's deputy speaker.

"Our obligation was to write the letter if we could answer the questions they were posing," Ponder said.

The letter would not require anyone to contribute, but would just