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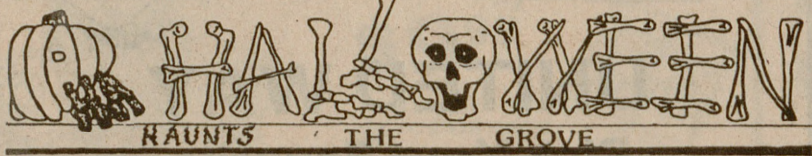
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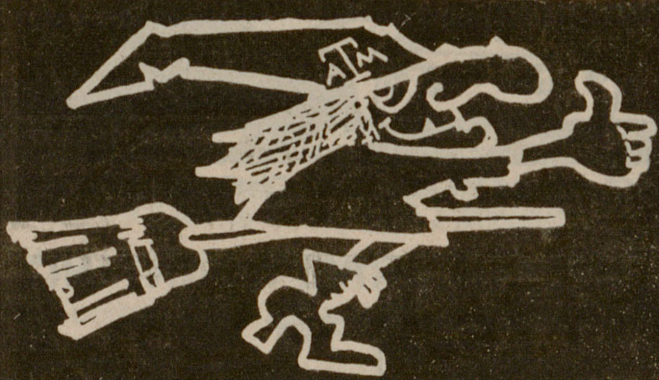
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FBI agents look into hijacking of San Antonio company plane

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — FBI agents are investigating the hijacking and theft of a commuter plane whose pilots were left tied up on the ground after being forced to land in remote northern Mexico, officials said.

FBI Special Agent Pat Cowley said agents had questioned the pilot and sales agent who worked for Chaparral Aviation Inc. of San Antonio about the hijacking.

The nine-seat plane was commandeered in mid-air over the Rio Grande Valley. Chaparral officials

said mid-air hijackings of private planes are rare.

"It's an unusual way to do it," Chaparral General Manager Dick Hetzel said Tuesday. "Airplanes get stolen, but usually they just take it like you steal a car."

The two Chaparral employees had flown from San Antonio to McAllen on Monday to meet with some people who said they were interested in buying the plane.

"They must have presented themselves that way," Hetzel said of the thieves. "They wanted the airplane, obviously."

The Chaparral employees then took their customers for a demonstration flight aboard the Beech King Air 300, a nine-seat, twin-engine turbo-prop airplane.

"While on the test flight, the customer asked the pilot to fly him over Mexican territory. The pilot told him he could not because they were not cleared for Mexico," Cowley said Tuesday.

The customer pulled a gun and forced the pilot to fly into Mexico where they landed at an unidenti-

fied airstrip. Cowley said San Antonio men were tied up behind before the plane took away.

"We have no idea where the site was down there," Hetzel said. "It couldn't have been very far."

The men eventually made their way to a telephone and company officials in San Antonio Monday.

The plane was worth about \$1 million new, but since it was old, Hetzel said he didn't know much it was worth.

Texas banking commissioner resigns seeks Austin private business interest

AUSTIN (AP) — Texas Savings and Loan Commissioner L. Linton Bowman III said Wednesday he is leaving his post to go into private business consulting with financial institutions.

Bowman, who submitted his resignation to the savings and loan section of the Finance Commission of Texas, said he has been planning the move since January because he became vested in the state retirement system this year.

His resignation from the \$77,250-a-year job is effective Nov. 16.

Bowman, 58, said his retirement as the state's chief thrift regulator is not related to controversy that arose this year over his partnership in a real estate company with the former chairman of a failed Dallas thrift.

In financial disclosure statements, Bowman listed a partnership in Cottonwood Investments Inc. with former Vernon Savings & Loan Association chairman Patrick King.

Vernon was declared insolvent this year, and regulators charged in a federal lawsuit that King and other former officers "looted" the thrift.

"This decision (to resign) was made back in January," said Bowman, who has been commissioner since 1983. Bowman said his consulting firm will be based in Austin and will offer a variety of services to financial institutions. It will specialize in helping savings and loans handle newly acquired real estate, he said.

"You've got a fantastic amount of real estate

out there that's owned by savings and loans," he said. "Something has got to be done."

In a statement to the financial regulatory body, Bowman said of his time as commissioner, "This has been a difficult experience for Texas and its savings and loans."

"It has not been easy or fun, to say the least, to act as the regulator during such times. It has been a responsibility which I have carried lightly," he said.

R. Dary Stone of Dallas, elected to head the financial section Wednesday, said "We appreciate everything you've done. You had one of the most, if not the most, jobs" in state regulation.

Jury orders Southland Insurance to pay \$3.1 million in death claim

LIPSCOMB, Texas (AP) — A jury rejected Southland Life Insurance Co.'s reasons for refusing to honor the policy of a Booker banker who died last year in a plane crash, and ordered the company to pay \$3.1 million to his widow.

The jury said Tuesday the company was guilty of withholding payment on a \$700,000 policy to Glen Lemon's widow, Helaine. Court records show Lemon held about \$12.2 million in coverage when he died in the crash near Liberal, Kan., in November.

Records show that most of the insurance was bought nine months prior to his death. This prompted speculation that Lemon could have

staged his death or committed suicide.

Southland is one of five companies that withheld life insurance payments to Lemon's estate. The others are Massachusetts Indemnity and Life, Security Connecticut, Great American Reserve and American Mutual.

"I really have no comment at this time," Robert Vlach, Southland vice president and general counsel, said Wednesday of the jury award. American Mutual refuses to pay until a jury decides if Lemon lied to get the policy, said Dick Lozier, an American Mutual attorney. American Mutual claims Lemon misrepresented

his wealth by concealing millions of dollars of other life insurance so he could get a policy from it, Lozier said.

Southland Life had based its refusal to pay on the same grounds.

Lemon's brother, Robert Lemon, and family attorney Marvin Jones called the verdict a clear signal for the four other insurance companies to pay up.

Lemon's widow consented in early August to American Mutual's request to have her husband's body exhumed to verify the identity of the body. The Sept. 26 autopsy confirmed Lemon's body was in the Heart Cemetery grave near Booker.

Alien-smuggler's brother receives 18-month federal prison sentence

EL PASO (AP) — The brother of notorious alien-smuggler "El Chapulin" has been sentenced to 18 months in federal prison for smuggling three aliens in a railroad boxcar, officials said Wednesday.

Arturo Hernandez Garcia, 32, was sentenced for his role in smuggling three Peruvian nationals from Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, to Fort Worth in a railroad boxcar, U.S. Border Patrol spokesman Michael Wheat said.

Garcia is the brother of Enrique Hernandez Garcia, whose Spanish

nickname translates to "The Grasshopper."

The sole survivor in the Sierra Blanca boxcar tragedy that left 18 people dead gave authorities information that led to Arturo Hernandez Garcia's arrest, Wheat said. Authorities believe the still-missing Grasshopper was responsible for that incident.

Arturo Garcia "was arrested July 8 in Fort Worth based on information given by the survivor of the Sierra Blanca boxcar tragedy," Wheat said.

Miguel Tostado Rodriguez was the lone survivor among 19 illegal aliens trying to sneak across the border in a locked, airtight boxcar.

Rodriguez pointed out his cousin at a Fort Worth drop house where nine illegal aliens were found, Wheat said. The cousin directed agents to a second drop house, where authorities found Garcia, he said.

A U.S. Marshal picked up Garcia from an El Paso detention center and will determine in which federal penitentiary Garcia will serve his sentence.

Skeleton discovered in El Paso

EL PASO (AP) — Police identified the last of four whose skeletons were found in the desert of El Paso.

The remains of Dawn Smith of El Paso were covered Oct. 20 within a few feet of where three other bodies had been discovered, police spokesman J.R. Grijalva said Monday. Grijalva described the habitual runaway who died in June, stayed in the El Paso area and was last seen in El Paso in late August. She has been named in the Grijalva said. He would comment on whether police suspects, nor could he comment on the evidence police gathered. Police have been ordered to label the killings as serial murders, but have not ruled out the possibility exists. Grijalva said police plan to continue to search the area for more bodies.

Miss Smith was identified through dental records, he said. Her body was found the same day police found the body of Desiree Wheeler of El Paso. On Sept. 4, Wheeler's body was found in the Karen Baker, 20, of El Paso, Maria Rosa Casio, 24, of El Paso, Texas. Baker and Casio were found buried about 500 feet from each other. Police will continue to search the area for the other two skeletons found within a half-mile of the first two bodies.

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