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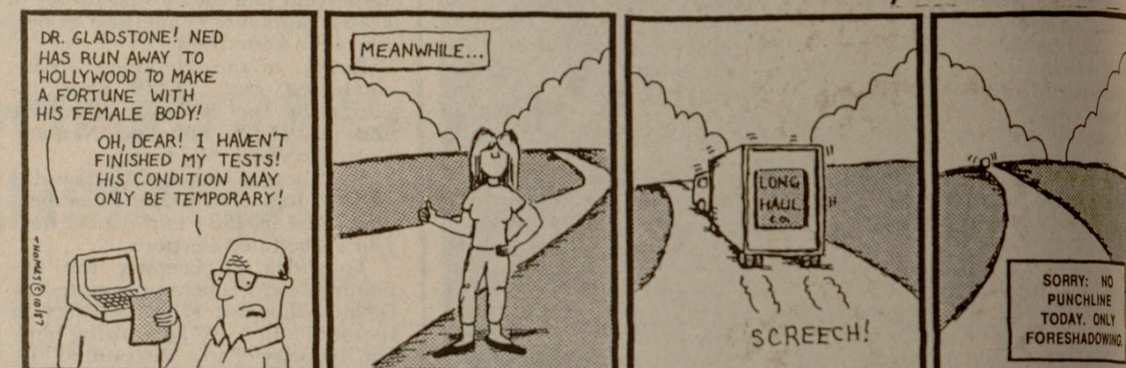


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San Antonio congressman: Man he struck was armed

WASHINGTON (AP) — Rep. Henry Gonzalez, in a rambling hyperbolic speech on the House floor, claimed that a man he punched at a San Antonio restaurant last year was armed with both a nine-inch hunting knife and a deadly "plastic" gun.

The 71-year-old San Antonio Democrat has not said anything previously about a gun being a part of the incident, which occurred at a restaurant Dec. 4 after a patron called him a communist.

The 26-year veteran congressman now claims that the man, William Allen, had the weapon tucked into his left pocket and attempted to draw as Gonzalez approached after overhearing him say he was "our No. 1 communist."

"As I approached him and got closer, I noticed in his left pocket he had one of these new dangerous deadly so-called plastic guns," Gonzalez said in a special order speech on the House floor Monday.

"When I said, 'Stand up and look me in the eye,' he pushed back again, Clint Eastwood style, like you see in the movies when you see the quick draw and all of a sudden he has gunned down eight people," Gonzalez said.

"He dropped his hand to the scabbard and his left arm to the pocket. I then hit him on the right cheek. I did not punch; I pulled my punch because I did not want to hit him at any other than that which would cause him to restrain that movement of moving toward that knife," Gonzalez said.

Gonzalez, who was an amateur boxer in his youth, left the 40-year-old Allen sprawled on the restaurant floor with one blow to his face.

Afterward, two companions guided the congressman from the restaurant.

In his harangue on the House floor, Gonzalez accused the Bexar County district attorney, a court judge assigned to the case and members of the San Antonio's media of persecuting him for political reasons.

The misdemeanor assault on August after Allen said he wanted the case "over with."

He said he would not pursue the case, either, would not pursue the case, either, would not pursue the case, either.

The Bexar County district attorney's office, in requesting the dismissal, said Gonzalez had apologized.

Rescuers of toddler to be acknowledged at Midland festivities

MIDLAND (AP) — On the day named after Jessica McClure, rescuers who helped pluck the toddler from the depths of an abandoned well will be feted with a parade, speeches and loads of stuffed animals.

Gov. Bill Clements issued the statewide proclamation Wednesday designating Thursday as "Jessica McClure Day," saying those who helped Jessica showed Texans' sense of caring, compassion and concern.

"Texans across our great state continue to marvel at the strength and resolve evidenced by Jessica McClure and her rescuers before and after her dramatic rescue," Clements said.

"That strength and determination has drawn the collective respect of those in Texas, the United States and throughout the world," the governor said.

About 450 police officers, firefighters, utility employees and other workers aided in the rescue of Jessica.

The 19-month-old girl fell into a well two weeks ago and was trapped for 58 hours, during which she screamed for her mother and sang "Winnie-the-Pooh." The volunteers controlled crowds, helped drill a rescue shaft and provided refreshments.

Jessica remains at Midland Memorial Hospital, recovering from injuries she suffered in the ordeal.

She won't be able to attend the festivities, but her parents, Chip and Cissy McClure, will take part, organizer Norma Webb said.

Webb said she doesn't know how many rescuers will march in the parade and noted that many of the volunteers initially were reluctant to participate for modesty's sake.

"A lot of those who expressed reluctance reconsidered after they were told their presence was requested by the McClures, and I expect a lot to appear," she said.

The small parade will be comprised of the volunteers, a couple of high school bands and the Midland College drill team. Mickey Mouse and Winnie-the-Pooh will visit from Disneyland. The McClures will watch from a reviewing stand.

"Various people were trying to honor the volunteers, and it was too fragmented, so they (McClures) asked the city and chamber to put it together," said Webb, a Chamber of Commerce volunteer.

The parade is scheduled to begin at 4 p.m. CST at the hospital and will end about 40 minutes later at Centennial Plaza downtown.

At the plaza, there will be a release of balloons, an Air Force jet flyby and thank-you speeches by Mayor Carroll Thomas and Chamber of Commerce Chairman Charles Spence.

The McClures will present each rescuer with a black-and-white photo of Jessica being pulled from the well.

Each picture will be signed by the McClures with their thanks, Webb said.

Well-wishers swamped Jessica with more stuffed toys than she can ever use, so her parents will give some away to rescuers' children, Webb said.

A 6-foot-square get-well card from San Angelo is expected to arrive in Midland Thursday, signed by thousands of West Texans.

Program sells HUD houses for \$100 down

AUSTIN (AP) — Foreclosed houses in the Austin and San Antonio areas can be purchased from the federal Housing and Urban Development Department with a down payment of just \$100 under a new program, officials said.

The program was started Friday by the San Antonio area office of HUD, which includes Austin, to clear away its inventory of foreclosed houses.

Buyers previously had needed a 3 percent down payment on a house selling for less than \$50,000, said Joe Rhodes, director of housing management at the San Antonio HUD office.

On more expensive homes, a buyer had to put down 5 percent of the first \$25,000 and 5 percent of the balance.

Now, a buyer needs the \$100 down payment, a \$500 application fee that would be applied toward the mortgage, and three months of insurance and taxes, said Dahlia Martinez, director of property disposition for HUD in San Antonio.

"Our inventory has grown dramatically in the last six months," Martinez said. "Last year we sold four properties in Austin. Currently we have about 435."

HUD insures Federal Housing Administration home loans. A buyer defaults, HUD takes over the property and tries to resell it.

The 57-county San Antonio area office has 1,500 houses in its inventory. Rhodes said his office has been taking back more than 200 FHA-insured properties a month since June.

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