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Uncle charged in death of raped, strangled girl

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — A 13-year-old girl who was raped and strangled while her parents slept in a nearby room had been monitored for 11 years by social workers who suspected child abuse, officials said Wednesday.

The girl's stepuncle, Kelvin Lee Odoms, an exterminator company worker who had lived with the family for two months, was in the Bexar County Jail Wednesday in lieu of \$100,000 bond on a capital murder charge, Chief Deputy Maurice Rose said.

"He had sex relations with her and she got up and got dressed and threatened to tell her parents and he got mad and just strangled her," Rose said.

Shanique Herbert was killed Friday while her father and stepmother slept in their room, and her body was dumped in a culvert 100 yards away. Her coat and purse also were taken to the site in order to throw off investigators, who found the body Sunday, Rose said.

Texas Department of Human Services officials said they had been investigating charges of abuse of the teen-ager for 11 years.

David Reilly, regional administrator for the Texas Department of Human Services, said social workers could have monitored her situation more in recent years if budget cuts had not forced the staff to look into more severe cases.

"I don't think anybody could have predicted this could have happened," Reilly said.

He said social workers became familiar with the girl in 1977 when she was 2 years old and living with her natural parents.

The girl was placed in foster care after reports of physical abuse, but was soon returned to her parents' home, Reilly said.

Shanique was removed from the home again in 1978 after her infant sister died from severe head injuries, Reilly said.

No one was charged in connection with the infant's death and Shanique left foster care in 1980 to live with her paternal grandfather, Reilly said.

Two other reports of child abuse cases — one in April 1986 and in one in January 1987 — were filed with state authorities.

Reilly said those reports involved

excessive force in connection with beatings with a belt when the girl was living with her father and stepmother.

"She was whipped with a belt for some kind of a school problem. We couldn't find any bruises," Reilly said. "She had misbehaved and that's the way they had disciplined her. They had put her on the bed and spanked her with the belt."

Reilly said the family was referred to counseling and that the department never considered removing her from the home.

"She wasn't considered to be in any danger, but we did believe the discipline was excessive," he said, adding that he has not determined how she ended up with her father.

A sheriff's department report said Shanique told a friend that she had been physically and verbally abused and that she had been beaten in the face and elsewhere with shoes.

Rose said that when authorities started questioning the family about the girl's slaying their stories did not fit.

Odoms, 27, was the brother of the girl's stepmother.

Inmate will be executed for murder

NEW BRAUNFELS (AP) — Comal County jury sentenced Richard Lewis Brimage Wednesday to be executed for capital murder conviction in an October strangulation of a Texas A&I University student.

Mary Beth Kunkel, a 19-year-old freshman, was reported missing Oct. 5. Her body was discovered bound in the trunk of a dilapidated car in Brimage's parents' garage in Kingsville two days later.

"I feel very relieved," said Frances Kunkel, the victim's mother, after the guilty verdict was returned Tuesday. "I get to decide and the court decides. All I wanted was justice."

During closing arguments, defense attorney W.R. "Dick" Hitchens said Brimage, 32, was a guilty of capital murder and argued the prosecution had proved a kidnapping occurred.

"There's a young girl dead. It's not capital murder," Hitchens said.

Hitchens said co-defendant Leonel Molina's testimony indicated that Brimage did not intend to kill Kunkel. Molina, 22, pleaded guilty to murder in a case in exchange for a 50-year prison term and his testimony in the Brimage trial.

Brimage, who had sketched pictures during most of the testimony, cried quietly Tuesday while the jury heard a tape-recorded interview with Kingsville police Capt. George Gomez and Molina.

Brimage's father, Richard, said his son's actions were motivated by his drug addiction.

"He didn't do it. Dope did it," the elder Brimage said.

Sterling C. Evans' donation may improve A&M's library

By Jamie Russell
Staff Writer

A former Texas A&M student has donated more than his name to the University's library.

A \$250,000 endowment from Sterling C. Evans may create an opportunity to enhance the library's faculty and provide a better facility, library director Irene B. Hoadley said Wednesday.

"The principle reason for the library endowment is to recognize the library as part of the academic institution," Hoadley said. "Another reason is to enhance the director of library position so as to look more attractive, more desirable for the next director."

Evans donated \$250,000 to set up the Sterling C. Evans Endowed Chair in Library Administration.

Hoadley said the endowment will

add to the funds used for library purposes such as acquiring books and providing services.

"As of yet, we don't know how the funds will be spent," Hoadley said. "The interest from the investment won't be available anytime soon."

Two endowed chairs were established in the January meeting of the Texas A&M Board of Regents.

John and Sara Lindsey of Houston gave \$250,000 to set up an endowed chair in liberal arts to be held by A&M President Frank E. Vandiver when he resigns as president later this year to head the newly created Edward J. Mosher Defense Studies Institute.

The funds for both chairs will be matched by the Texas A&M University System under provisions of the Endowed Faculty Scholars Program, making the chairs worth a total of \$1 million.

Evans said he is pleased with the library and hopes the chair will help the library to improve.

"With \$500,000, the board has a chance to get the best librarian and have the best library in the country," he said. "I'm very pleased with the library and I want it to be good."

Only two other established chairs in administration exist at a university research library nationwide, Evans said.

The other two are at Stanford University and Northwestern University.

Vandiver was out of town and could not be reached for comment about the creation of the liberal arts endowed chair. Dr. Robert Walker, vice president for development at A&M, also was out of town and could not be reached for comment.

Police shoot, kill prisoner after escape

AMARILLO (AP) — Authorities shot and killed a Potter County inmate who escaped and took a hospital worker hostage Wednesday afternoon.

Potter County Sheriff James Boydston said Shelby Manuel, 32, escaped from custody while preparing to have a chest X-ray taken at Northwest Texas Hospital.

"While in the stage of dressing to get ready for X-rays, he ran the back door, found a scalpel-like instrument and took an X-ray technician hostage," Boydston said.

Authorities negotiated with Manuel for approximately two hours before storming a room where he had taken the hostage, whose name was not immediately released.

A Randall-Potter County State Crimes unit team shot and killed Manuel, Boydston said. The hostage-taking began about 1 p.m., Boydston said it was over by 3 p.m.

Hospital spokesman Lynell LaBe said the female hostage was recovering and was suffering from "minor shock." It was not immediately known if the hostage was present when Manuel was killed.

Man charged with burglary claims he was chasing cat

DALLAS (AP) — A man charged with burglary after falling 50 feet to a concrete floor of a Dallas automobile dealership told police he had been chasing a cat.

Michael Thornton, 29, suffered a broken leg and internal injuries and was taken to Parkland Memorial Hospital, authorities said. He was in fair condition Wednesday. Dallas police have charged him with burglary.

Police said Thornton had broken through a skylight of the Forest Lane Porsche-Audi dealership and was trying to reach a rope that teth-

ers an advertising balloon floating over the dealership.

The man lost his grip on a metal rod and fell 50 feet to a concrete floor and spent about eight hours there before he was discovered, police investigator Mike Wallace said.

Employee Bill Hudson found the man early Tuesday after calling police to report he heard someone yelling in the service area.

"When he hollered 'Help,' it kind of scared me, because I'm supposed to be the only one here," Hudson said. "I was trying to decide what to do, and finally I turned on some

lights and I could see him back there."

Thornton asked Hudson to help him up, but Hudson called an ambulance instead.

Officers arrived and found evidence indicating Thornton scaled the building to reach the skylight, Hudson said.

"I asked him what he was doing in the building, and he said he fell through a hole in the roof," Hudson said. "So then I asked him what he was doing on the roof. He said he was chasing a cat."

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