

14 charged in case of sedition go on trial under heavy security

FORT SMITH, Ark. (AP) — Fourteen men, including 10 charged with seditious conspiracy, go on trial today in U.S. District Court under tight security.

Late Monday, several of the defendants who are already serving prison sentences or were held without bond were brought to the federal building under heavy guard.

Two of the 14 have been on the FBI's '10 Most Wanted' list — Richard Joseph Scutari and Louis Ray Beam Jr.

Scutari, who was acquitted in the Berg case, is serving 60 years in federal prison after pleading guilty in the Seattle racketeering case.

Beam, who was arrested in Mexico in an incident in which his wife shot a Mexican policeman, is a former grand dragon of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan in Texas and wrote an essay outlining a point-system for becoming an Aryan Warrior — points were earned for killing

people, ranging from one-tenth of a point for a policeman to a full point for killing the president, government investigators have testified.

After four Fort Smith patrol cars blocked streets beside the building, three unmarked cars and one van rolled up to the federal building and plainclothes officers carrying sub-machine guns stepped out.

The defendants, in manacles, were taken in pairs into the building.

The trial constitutes the fourth strike by the government against white supremacist terrorism in the United States during the last several years. Earlier trials took place at Seattle, Denver and Fort Smith.

Seditious conspiracy is a conspiracy to overthrow the government of the United States by violence. The indictment was returned in April by a grand jury.

The defendants had links to a variety of white-supremacist, Jew-hat-

ing, black-hating, militant and sometimes religious organizations.

To carry out their schemes, various defendants robbed, bombed, killed, counterfeited and committed other crimes, the government contends.

Two defendants are charged with transporting across state lines money stolen in a Ukiah, Calif., armored truck holdup in which \$3.6 million was taken on July 19, 1984. About a dozen men participated in that holdup.

Five defendants are charged with a 1984 plot to kill U.S. District Judge H. Franklin Waters of Fort Smith and FBI Special Agent Jack D. Knox of Fayetteville.

Waters was the trial judge and Knox a key figure in the prosecution of people in the 1983 harboring of Gordon Kahl, a Posse Comitatus member who was wanted for the murder of two U.S. marshals in North Dakota.

Kahl was killed June 3, 1983, at a shootout at a home at Smithville, Ark. An Arkansas county sheriff, Gene Matthews, also died in that shootout.

The government says some of the defendants were associated with the Arkansas-based supremacist group known as the Covenant, the Sword and the Arm of the Lord and with Ku Klux Klan groups in several states, including Texas and Michigan.

Besides the Ukiah robbery, overt acts attributed by the government to the 10 who are charged with seditious conspiracy are holdups and bombings of utility facilities.

David Eden Lane, 49, and Bruce Carroll Pierce, 37, who are defendants, were convicted in November in Denver of violating the civil rights of Denver radio talk show host Alan Berg. Berg, a Jew, ridiculed white supremacists during his show.

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Crowd chases after suspect of burglary

FORT WORTH (AP) — A man suspected of burglarizing a van said he was glad to see police arrive. An angry crowd was trying to get at him, but had been persuaded by a woman with a toy gun to back off until officers got there.

The man, 29, was being held in the Tarrant County Jail on Monday pending the filing of charges, Doug Clarke, a spokesman with the Fort Worth Police Department, said.

"I was never so glad to see the police in my life," a Fort Worth Police report quoted the man as saying.

About a dozen people, one carrying a big stick, chased and cornered a man suspected of burglarizing a van.

As the crowd neared the man, he screamed for a woman in a nearby house to call police.

Survey showing high levels of nitrates causing concern

DALLAS (AP) — A state survey shows high levels of nitrates in dozens of West Texas wells, causing concern about the drinking water for more than one million rural Texans.

A preliminary study by the Texas Department of Agriculture indicates that 47 of 75 wells sampled in Comanche, Knox and Haskell counties exceed the federal standard for nitrates.

Some of the water tested had concentrations of nitrates that were 15 times the standard set by the federal Environmental Protection Agency.

Nitrates can be found naturally in some soils, but also are in fertilizer and around septic tanks and feedlots.

High levels of nitrates can cause the sometimes fatal "blue baby" syndrome, in which the transfer of oxygen is restricted through the infant's body.

Health officials in the studied area say they have received no reports of unusual infant deaths or illnesses.

But state agriculturists still are concerned about the high level of nitrates in areas that contain intensive farming.

"We're especially concerned about the rural drinking water supply, said Rick Piltz, of the agriculture agency Office of Natural Resources.

"We have about 1 million Texans drinking out of private wells, mostly in rural areas, and these wells have no protection under (federal laws) that require the testing of public drinking water supplies," Piltz said.

He said the groundwater study will be expanded to other counties, mostly those in the southern High Plains.

In the wells tested, nitrate concentrations ranged from slightly above

the EPA standard of 44.3 parts per million to 15 times the limit.

Five of the 75 wells also exceed standards for pesticides, Piltz said.

He said the owners of the wells have been contacted by the agriculture agency.

Knox County Judge David Perdue expressed little surprise of the study's findings.

"Considering what we put on our soil as far as fertilizers, and with the advent of oil and with all the other stuff that's dumped down the wells, who knows what in the world you've got when you mix all that together," he said.

Neither the state nor federal government regulates private water supplies.

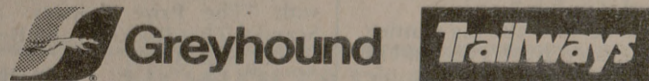
Alarm at pollution levels in Nebraska prompted lawmakers there in 1986 to pass a series of groundwater protection laws.

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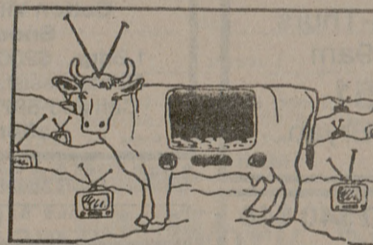
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