



## Three students charged with drug trafficking

By Kelly S. Brown

STAFF WRITER

Ten people, including three Texas A&M students, were indicted Wednesday by a federal grand jury in Houston on 60 counts of racketeering charges and federal drug trafficking.

A&M students arrested Friday are: Alejandro Montes, 26, a senior industrial distribution major; Raphael (Toto) Urdaneta, 24, a sophomore dairy science major; and David Christopherson, 25, a senior history major.

Other local residents arrested under the indictment Friday are: Linda Johnson, 26; Travis Davis, 26; and Orlen Howell, 23.

Barry Bleike, 25, a former Bryan resident; Noel Arturo Macal, 26, of Houston; and Marco Gonzalez, 25, of Lufkin also were arrested.

The ring leader was arrested last month in Houston. The indictment charged that Leoncio Ysrael Espailat, the alleged ring leader of the drug ring, established a cocaine distribution network in the Bryan-College Station area and supplied cocaine to be sold to A&M students.

Assistant United States Attorney Charles Lewis said the year-and-a-half-long investigation uncovered a major source of supply, if not the principal source of supply, of cocaine in the Bryan-College Station area.

Lewis said at the peak of the operation, those involved were selling 10 kilos per week in Bryan-College Station. A kilo's street value is \$15,000 to \$20,000.

According to the indictment, 200 to 300 pounds of cocaine were sold in Brazos Valley during 1987 and during 1988.

The main focus of the drug ring was to sell and traffic narcotics to A&M students, Lewis said.

"A&M was one aspect of the investigation, but it didn't center at A&M — it was targeted at A&M," Lewis said. "The organization conspired to sell drugs in and around the Bryan-College Station area, with ties to Houston, Miami and South America."

"We just happened to infiltrate the organization in Bryan-College Station through various investigative means."

Espailat, 29, is also known as Leo, Jose Lazala and Leo Labrador. He was arrested Jan. 13 and is being held without bond in Houston. If convicted of the charges, Espailat faces life imprisonment.

The indictment said Espailat falsely claimed to be an A&M petroleum engineering graduate and a diplomat from the Dominican Republic with diplomatic immunity from criminal prosecution in the United States.

"Espailat did not graduate from A&M," Lewis said. "He's not a diplomat, but he is a citizen of the Dominican Republic and is in the United States on a passport. Espailat made these false claims to ensure payments for cocaine debts."

"He would make his cocaine distributors and customers believe he could use bodily harm, murder or burn down a home with immunity from prosecution."

Henry Oncken, the U.S. Attorney for the

Southern District of Texas, called a press conference Friday at the Brazos County Courthouse to announce the arrest of the other nine individuals named in the indictment.

Along with Oncken and Lewis, representatives from the FBI, the Department of Public Safety, the University Police Department and the District Attorney's office were present.

One of the defendants mentioned in the indictment, Gonzalez, is a former manager of The Edge, a College Station nightclub. According to the indictment, he used the club as a cocaine distribution point.

Gary Seaback, owner of The Edge, said he doesn't know of any drug dealings at the club now. Seaback fired Gonzalez more than a year ago because of his alleged involvement with drugs.

Drug dealings weren't the only offenses mentioned in the indictment.

According to the indictment, some individuals in the ring planned to steal cars from Allen Honda in College Station and

exchange them for drugs with individuals in South America.

The indictment said that in October 1988, Espailat and Bleike agreed that Bleike would arrange for the theft of four new vehicles which Espailat would export in exchange for cocaine.

Espailat paid Bleike \$2,000 and agreed to pay him 60 ounces of cocaine upon the delivery of the stolen vehicles to Espailat in Houston, the indictment said. Bleike contacted Howell, another defendant in the indictment and an employee of Allen Honda in College Station, about the plan. Howell made duplicate keys for four new automobiles and gave them to Bleike on Oct. 9, according to the indictment.

Travis Davis, another defendant, and three other persons recruited by Davis went to Allen Honda on Oct. 12 supposedly to steal four new vehicles, valued at approximately \$70,000.

Andrew Duffin, the FBI special agent in

See Drug ring/Page 7

## New council will direct Afghan forces

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — President Najib, seeking to tighten his grip on the government and military, will form and lead a supreme military council to coordinate the armed forces' fight against Moslem guerrillas, the foreign minister said Sunday.

The announcement came a day after Najib declared a nationwide state of emergency and replaced seven members of his Cabinet who were not members of his ruling People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan.

In Islamabad, Pakistan, guerrillas trying to form their own interim government failed to agree on a Cabinet list, and several delegates walked out of a meeting.

Guerrillas also claimed to have captured a provincial capital in central Afghanistan, taking government soldiers prisoner and seizing arms and ammunition.

Foreign Minister Abdul Wakil said in an interview with British Broadcasting Corp. radio the military council will coordinate economic and military activities and will be formed "in the next few days."



Deuce scorekeepers

Sophomore Mike Cortez and senior Bryan Rayburn braved the cold Sunday to keep score for the A&M vs. Mississippi State

women's tennis matches at the Omar Smith Tennis Center.

See related story/Page 10

Photo by Phelan M. Ebenhack

## Officer charged with abduction, assault of woman

HOUSTON (AP) — A 27-year-old Houston police officer has been charged in the kidnapping and sexual assault of a Houston woman and the robbery of her boyfriend while the officer was on duty, authorities said.

The woman memorized the license plate number of the car in which she was abducted, and when investigators traced the number they discovered it was a department vehicle, undisclosed police sources told a Houston newspaper.

Officer Harold Ingram Burkett was arrested at work early Saturday and charged with aggravated robbery, kidnapping and aggravated sexual assault. He was released late Saturday on \$40,000 bond.

Burkett, who was working a special assignment in plain clothes when the crimes allegedly occurred, has been relieved of duty with pay, police spokesman Dan Turner said.

The officer allegedly stopped the couple after midnight on Feb. 12, forcing the boyfriend into the trunk of his car, Turner said.

The woman was then abducted and driven to an unknown location where she was sexually assaulted, then released on a Houston street, he said. She immediately called police.

Department spokesmen released few details of the allegations against Burkett, who lives in the Houston suburb of Tomball. However, police sources told the *Houston Chronicle* that the assailant wore a mask during the attack and confronted the couple with a gun.

After the license tag number provided by the woman was traced to a department vehicle, the Internal Affairs division conducted a weeklong investigation, the sources said. Evidence was uncovered that departmental automobile logs had been altered, the sources said.

Turner said Internal Affairs investigators received information that led to an "intensive investigation," resulting in Burkett's arrest. He said Houston residents should not be fearful of the city's police officers, describing the alleged attack as an isolated incident.

"Our officers are professionals," Turner said, adding that the department's Internal Affairs division exists "to maintain the conduct of Houston officers."

Turner said Sunday he did not have access to Burkett's service record with the department.

## Sports compliance officer pushes prevention

By Stephen Masters

SENIOR STAFF WRITER

If you think keeping up with the Texas A&M Athletic Department is a glamorous job, you haven't spoken with Larry Dixon.

Dixon, the University's director of intercollegiate athletics compliance, stays busy all day, every day, filling out all the necessary NCAA forms, counseling student-athletes on their rights and responsibilities in avoiding violations and serving as a watchdog in the Athletic Department.

Dixon must also keep up with rule interpretations, sent out weekly by the NCAA, and inform coaches and players of these new definitions. Make no mistake — this is a full-time job. But it is a necessary job in A&M's new atmosphere of integrity.

The position of director of athletic compliance was created by University President William Mobley as part of the steps to "clean up" the Athletic Department in the aftermath of Jackie Sherrill's resignation.

In January, Dixon was hired from Texas Tech University, where he performed similar tasks. He has worked in the Southwest Conference for more than 10 years at Texas Tech and the University of Arkansas.

Dixon reports to Robert Smith, vice president for finance and administration. Mobley made Smith responsible for athletic compliance after George Smith's allegations were made public in a Nov. 18 story in the *Dallas Morning News*.

The purpose of creating the position was to install steps for prevention of NCAA violations, not just punish after the fact, Dixon said.

"The nature of the office is that it is preventative in the point that it is an educational service function, number one," he said. "The more the players, athletes and coaches know, the less opportunity there is for them to just involuntarily do something that they were not aware was a rule violation."

"I can assure that there are thousands of little things. No one can know everything. What you need to do is make the players and coaches

aware that they need to be cognizant of what they do."

Dixon said the best example of student-athletes affected by little rules are not players in the big name sports.

"The great examples that I use are tennis (players) and golfers," he said. "In the summer, a tennis player can go to work for a tennis club or a country club and give lessons. But he cannot give you an individual lesson and be paid by you."

"He can be hired by the country club and they can pay him by the month. He might give one lesson or 400 lessons during that month, but he can't be paid on a per lesson basis."

Dixon said this rule was installed after a booster paid a player under the guise of giving lessons. This method shows the thinking behind the old NCAA system of stressing punishment, he said.

During the last few years this attitude has changed toward prevention, but many people still believe cheating is rampant throughout college athletics, he said. Dixon said he believes this is a false assumption.

"Ninety percent of what you hear about cheating anywhere — I don't care where — it's rumor, innuendo and hearsay that never occurred," he said. "We tell them, 'If somebody's cheating, tell us who it is and what they did and when they did it, and we'll get something done about it.'"

"I've been doing this for 25 years now. I don't think cheating has ever been as bad as the public perceives it."

"You hear all this stuff like about Oklahoma. We say, 'Prove it.' When they start trying to prove it, most of it never happened."

Because he wasn't here during the Jackie Sherrill years, Dixon said he could not address the issue of cheating at A&M. But he said his past dealings around the conference have made him wonder.

"I've been in this conference for over 10 years and at both the schools I've been at (Texas Tech and Arkansas), we've been watching A&M,"

Dixon said. "For A&M to cheat is ridiculous to me. Everybody wants to come here. I know I did."

And that's why Dixon is here. If there's no reason to cheat, to make sure A&M doesn't.

"What I want to do is give them enough red flags so they will say, 'That could be a potential problem,'" he said. "That's the preventative side. That stops it before it ever becomes a problem. That's what we want."

Dixon said another part of prevention is the punishment of coaches found guilty of NCAA rules or procedural violations, something he explained with a hypothetical situation.

"The coaches know now, 'If I do something, I'm through. I'll have to change my whole profession. I will never coach again,'" he said.

"When I first started coaching, if I wanted to cheat, I could really cheat. If I got caught, the school got punished — the school just got put on probation — and I just went on my merry way down the road and went to another job and did what I wanted."

"Today that's no longer true. When the presidents restructured that part of the NCAA, they made it immensely better for everybody. I'm going to tell you right now — coaches have stopped cheating. They're scared of what might happen. The penalty follows a coach to his next job. A school cannot hire someone who is on probation at another place."

Even with the preventative and punitive actions, Dixon admits the NCAA system is not flawless.

"It's (the NCAA) like society and life in general," he said. "The perfect person or perfect system has not been invented. There are flaws in there. It's like the government. It's not perfect, but it's probably the best."

This past November, perfection seemed a long way away from A&M. It seems to be a little bit closer now. Perfection, just like integrity, isn't always glamorous.



Larry Dixon

Photo by Kathy Haveman

## Director predicts repeal of Prop. 42

By Stephen Masters

SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Controversial NCAA Proposition 42 probably will be repealed before it takes effect in Fall 1990, said Larry Dixon, Texas A&M's director of intercollegiate athletics compliance.

"My personal feeling is that next year, because of the public perception of things and because of pressure, they're going to repeal it for another three or four years," he said.

Dixon was hired in January to "work with Athletic Department personnel to ensure full compliance with institutional, Southwest Conference and NCAA rules and regulations," Robert Smith, vice president for finance and administration, said in a University News Service release. Dixon reports directly to Smith.

Prop. 42 requires three points before allowing scholarships for potential student-athletes: graduation from high school, a grade-point ratio of at least two in a four-point system and either a 15 on the American College Test or a 700 on the Scholastic Aptitude Test.

Persons meeting all three requirements are allowed four years of athletic eligibility and full athletic scholarships. Persons meeting two of the three requirements,

called partial qualifiers, are allowed three years of athletic scholarships. Persons meeting only one of the three requirements are not allowed any financial aid.

Prop. 42 would require potential student-athletes to meet all three requirements to receive any financial aid.

Dixon said most of the complaints arose because of the loss of financial aid caused by these partial qualifiers. The most publicized of these complaints was the boycott of games by Georgetown basketball coach John Thompson.

"Sure, there's the argument that John Thompson made where if we don't give a kid aid, you're depriving him the chance to go to school," Dixon said. "But to me, we're taking a whole group of the population and giving them something that other people don't have a chance to do."

"Could you go to Georgetown and get in if you weren't an athlete? No, because they've got some stipulations there for letting kids in. I sure can't shoot from three-point range. If I went up to Georgetown and said let me in, they wouldn't. They've let athletes in with an 800 on their SAT, but they tell me I've got to have a 1500? I really have a hard time understanding Coach Thompson's reasoning."

Dixon said he believes that the time dedication necessary for athletics makes it much more difficult for partial qualifiers to succeed academically.