

State police investigate horse track for handling of state loan money

G. Rollie White Downs only pari-mutuel horse racing in Texas

AUSTIN (AP) — State police are investigating G. Rollie White Downs, the only horse track to conduct pari-mutuel racing in Texas in more than 50 years, Racing Commission officials revealed Tuesday.

Clifford Grubbs, G. Rollie White Downs president, said the track had done nothing wrong and hopes the commission will award it additional racing dates for this spring and summer.

Racing Commissioner Glenn Blodgett said the Department of Public Safety probe centers on money that the track, located at Brady, received through a state agency program.

"As I understand it, they're looking at the money that was spent from that Texas Department of Commerce loan," Blodgett said. "They're looking at how that money was handled."

"That puts a cloud over the situation, it really does," the commissioner said of the track's request for extra racing days.

According to Commerce Department spokesman Michael Murphy, a \$480,000 grant was given to Brady through the community development block grant program. That program is designed to boost local economic development and create jobs.

Murphy said the city loaned the money to the race track. "What happened to that money after

it went to the city, I presume, is the question," Murphy said of the DPS probe.

Grubbs said he was confident no wrongdoing would be found and that the track was cooperat-

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— Clifford Grubbs, horse track president

ing with the DPS. The track conducted 24 days of racing from October to December last year, ending its race meet early.

"I'm not concerned about what they're checking because I can assure you that we have done nothing illegal, immoral or anything else," Grubbs said.

"We've made mistakes. We've been telling them (the commission) since halfway through this meet that we were in trouble. And we have been making mistakes, but they are honest mistakes."

Grubbs said he thinks the DPS is checking "facts and figures" from the track's initial application for a racing license.

"They've been out to the race track, looking at the records," he said. "They're free to open our books and look at anything we've got. We've tried to help them."

Grubbs said G. Rollie White Downs lost about \$180,000 last fall. He said it is more than \$800,000 in debt but is working with creditors and lenders.

The track wants additional racing dates, beginning May 1 and running through the summer, rather than waiting until the September start date approved earlier.

"The more days we race during the spring and summer, the more money we're going to make," Grubbs said.

Lawyer: Jury choice was racially biased

DALLAS (AP) — Prosecutors tried to eliminate minorities from a jury in the capital murder trial of an alleged drug lord suspected of killing five people in Texas and Oklahoma, his defense lawyers contend.

In a hearing before state District Judge Ron Chapman, attorneys for Genaro Camacho, 35, argued that records show prosecutors used eight of 14 peremptory challenges to exclude six blacks and two Hispanics from selection.

"This reflects a discriminatory pattern of the state's use of its peremptory challenges," said defense lawyer Julius Whittier, one of three lawyers representing Camacho.

Chapman set the hearing, which started Monday, to continue March 28.

Camacho faces trial next month on a charge of killing a man who walked in on the alleged

kidnapping of a Southeast Texas woman and her son in May 1988.

The bodies of the woman and her son were later found in shallow grave in Johnson County, Okla.

Whittier claimed that prosecutors violated a U.S. Supreme Court ruling that prosecutors may not be rejected solely because of their race.

The jury, made up of six men and six women, contains two minorities — two Hispanic women. But Assistant District Attorney Dennis Jones testified Monday that some of the minorities were disqualified because they could not assess the death penalty. Jones did not believe in it. The offense of capital murder is punishable by either life in prison or death.

Jones said the remaining minority candidates were eliminated for other reasons.

The jury will decide whether Camacho killed David Williams, 32, who was shot to death when he walked in on Camacho allegedly trying to kidnap a 13-year-old woman and her 3-year-old son May 20, 1988.

State education committee rejects pricey reform bill

Full House scheduled to review legislative school finance proposals

AUSTIN (AP) — The House Public Education Committee on Tuesday rejected a Senate school finance reform bill with a \$1.2 billion price tag, substituting its own \$450 million measure.

But that bill also is headed for a fight when it comes before the full House on Thursday, said Rep. Kent Grusendorf, one of its sponsors. He said he voted for the bill in committee only to get it to the House floor, where he plans to introduce his own substitute.

"There's too many unknowns" concerning the future cost of the House measure, said Grusendorf, R-Arlington. The committee approved the bill 6-1, with Rep. Alan Schoolcraft, R-San Antonio, voting against it.

Another bill sponsor, Rep. Ernestine Glossbrenner, said the bill provides the equity that the Texas Supreme Court said was needed when

it threw out the current system.

"I think that it would finally say that the quality of education for any school child in the state of Texas is not going to be a function of where they live," said Glossbrenner, D-Alice, head of the Public Education Committee.

Lawmakers are working in special session to answer the Supreme Court's ruling that the school finance system is unconstitutional be-

cause of disparities between property-rich and -poor school districts. The \$13.5 billion-a-year public school system relies on a combination of state aid, local property taxes and some federal funds.

The bill finally approved by the House likely will end up in a conference committee with the Senate measure, so lawmakers can try to work out differences.

"If everything goes right, we

could pass an education bill" to Gov. Bill Clements before the current special session ends at midnight March 28, House Speaker Gib Lewis said.

If a tax increase is required to pay for the measure, Lewis said, "We'll have to be back here week after next, and take that issue up."

But Clements, who has promised to veto any new taxes for court-ordered public school finance reform,

said of Lewis' statement, "I think I've heard of such a thing. I think it's mostly just conversation."

The governor has sole authority to call special legislative sessions.

Clements said a bill spending more than about \$250 million in 1990-91 school year would be payable because that amount would require a tax increase.

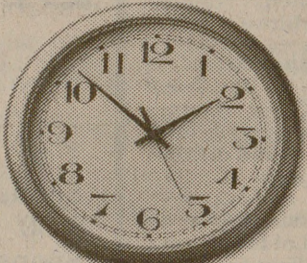
But Glossbrenner said Texas is willing to spend more money if it can be sure children are getting good education.

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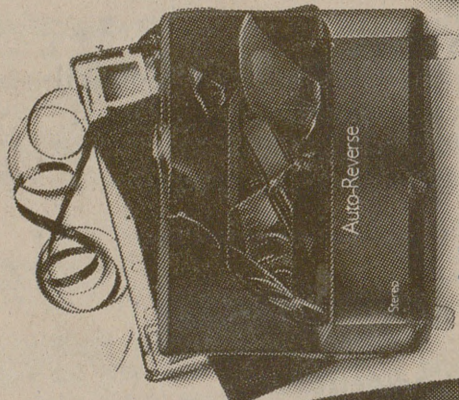
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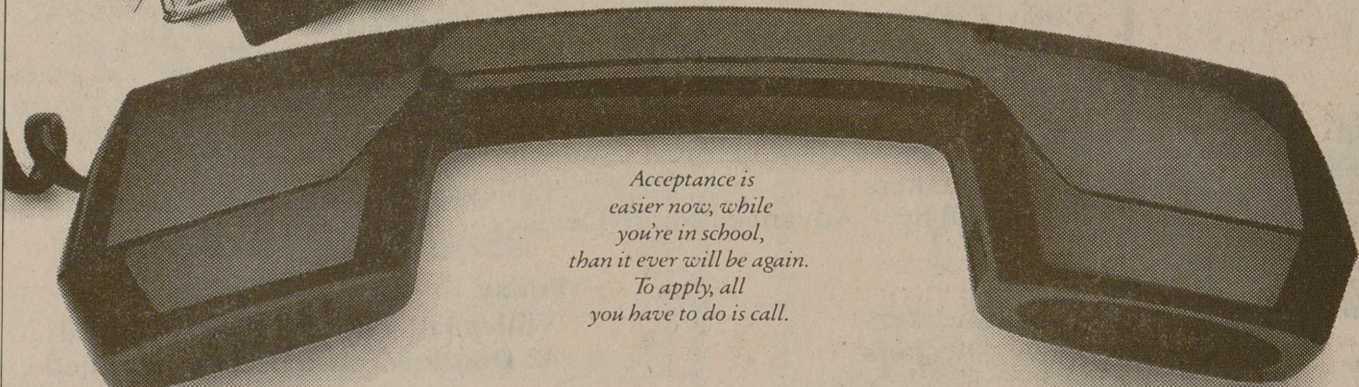


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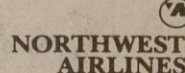
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