

Wednesday, August 29, 1990

Hussein makes second appearance; Texas families criticize propaganda

Associated Press

Texas families of hostages in Iraq were unimpressed Tuesday after watching President Saddam Hussein mingle with foreigners, but were comforted by his decree that women and children held captive could leave.

Families of the six Texans being held said they did not see their loved ones on Saddam's second televised visit with foreigners since Iraq invaded Kuwait Aug. 2.

The American hostage who died of a heart attack in Iraq was not from Texas, the families said. The Iraqi Foreign Ministry said the unidentified man in his mid-50s died in the Iraqi city of Basra and that his body would be turned over to the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad.

Saddam's second TV appearance with detainees was apparently intended to convince Western viewers that he is taking a reasonable stand in the crisis. But Texas families criticized it as a crude attempt to use the hostages for propaganda.

"My husband was not on television with Saddam," said Patricia Hale of her husband, Edward. "In another way, I wish they would quit showing them (American hostages) because it's just propaganda and we're playing into Hussein's hands."

"I would love to see my husband," said Hale, of Spring. "But Hussein is just trying to play the benevolent uncle and really isn't helping."

Edward Hale works for Houston-based OGE Drilling. The meeting was shown on Iraqi television and broadcast by Cable News Network. The first televised meeting with foreigners was last week.

The State Department, in a statement released Tuesday morning, said it could not confirm the cause of death or the identity of the American.

"I don't think it's my husband," said Marjorie Walterscheid of Jacksboro. "They said they had already notified the presumed next of kin. They didn't call me."

She said her husband, Rainard, 52, is among a group of Americans being held in Iraq. He is an

oilworker for Santa Fe Drilling Co.

Hostage Gary Carr's mother said she had heard her 46-year-old son was all right. Carr is believed to be in a group taken from a hotel to an industrial area near the Syrian border, but Edythe Carr said the family has been unable to confirm that.

Carr is from North Richland Hills near Fort Worth.

The wife of OGE employee John Henry Cole, 50, of Odessa said she was loaned a fax machine Monday to try to keep up with developments in the Middle East crisis, but has not heard from her husband since the day after the invasion.

"That's been over three weeks now, nearly a month ago," said Donnita Cole. "Since then, I have been reading anything I can pore over. I decided if I were actively doing something, I wouldn't be as frustrated, but all I can do is wait."

"Johnny is still out there somewhere," she said. Relatives of Bobby Parker, 48, a Kuwait Petroleum Co. worker from Vidor near Beaumont, said the Texan was not shown on television.

First group at Fort Sill heads for gulf

FORT SILL, Okla. (AP) — Medical workers from the field hospital of the 47th Combat Support Battalion headed for Saudi Arabia on Monday in the first sizeable deployment of forces from Fort Sill, a post spokeswoman said.

The workers were taken by bus to the Altus Air Force Base on Monday morning, post spokeswoman Sheila Samples said.

"They left late this afternoon on a DC-10, en route to Saudi Arabia," Samples said. "They're going to the Persian Gulf."

Samples said military security reasons prevented her from revealing the number of people sent or the nature of their assignments.

The 47th field hospital is part of the III Corps Artillery.

Individuals with specialized skills, such as mechanics or advisers, have been dispatched to Saudi Arabia from Fort Sill before Monday, Samples said.

'To preserve the image of the Arabs' Iraqi leader orders release of detained women, children

Associated Press

President Saddam Hussein of Iraq mingled with foreign hostages Tuesday and then decreed that the women and children held captive in his country were free to leave.

A statement from the Revolutionary Command Council said the decision was made "to preserve the image of Arabs," the official Iraqi News agency said.

The agency, monitored, in Nicosia, Cyprus, said the foreigners could leave starting Wednesday. It was not known how many women and children were among the hostages in Iraq or whether the decree also applies to foreigners in Kuwait.

There are 500 Americans trapped in Iraq and 2,500 in Kuwait.

The Iraqi news agency said Saddam made his decision after foreigners expressed concern about their children. During Tuesday's televised encounter, a woman with a British accent asked Saddam why he was using foreign children "in something they can't understand."

At the same meeting, Saddam told the foreigners he

"It (Hussein's offer for a television debate) is sick, and it doesn't even deserve a response."

—Margaret Tutwiler, State Department spokeswoman

was willing to talk to President Bush and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher on television about ending the Persian Gulf crisis.

State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler, when asked about Saddam's suggestion, said, "It's sick, and it doesn't even deserve a response."

Another department spokesman, Mark Dillen, said the U.S. government had received no official word of the planned release of women and children.

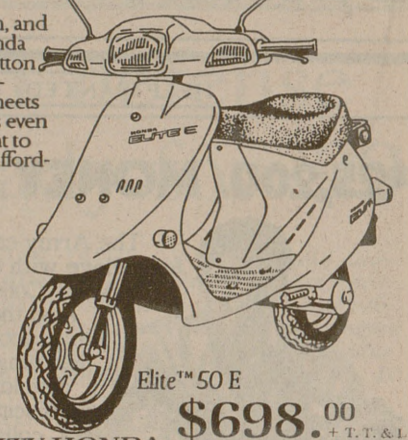
Also Tuesday, U.S. officials said an American civilian died of a heart attack in Iraq.

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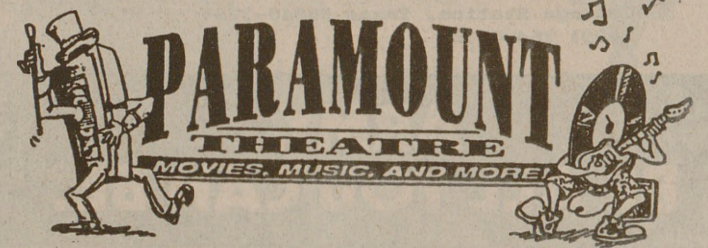


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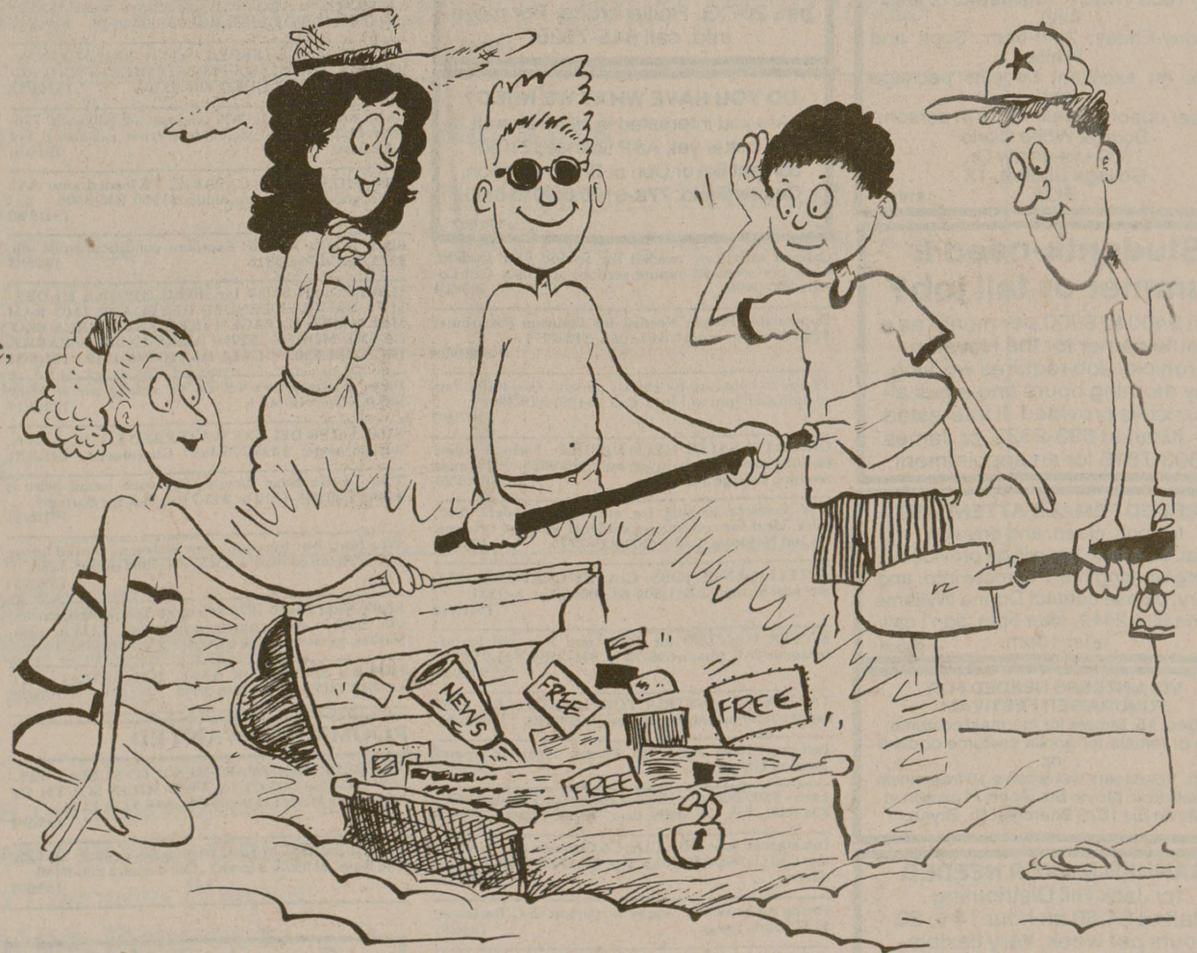
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