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Jury to determine fate of sect members

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

HOUSTON — A federal jury began deliberations Tuesday in the trial of three members of a radical polygamist sect accused of killing a young girl and three former members as part of an alleged plot to bring on "the kingdom of God."

Prosecutor Terry Clark called the defendants "murderous missionaries" who killed for God and the promise of obtaining worldly possessions for following their father's religious teachings.

But defense attorneys claimed if their clients killed, they did so as an act of revenge for years of abuse they suffered as children at the hands of three of their victims.

The trial in U.S. District Judge Simeon Lake's court began last Monday and included testimony from Cynthia LeBaron, who took the stand against her half-siblings.

William Heber LeBaron, 28, Patricia LeBaron, 27, and Douglas Lee Barlow, 31, were indicted in the July 27, 1988 fatal shootings, which were carried out almost simultaneously in three locations. If convicted, they face up to life in prison.

Jennifer Chynoweth, 8, her father, Duane Chynoweth, 31, were gunned down in a Houston driveway, while his brother, Mark Chynoweth, 36, was killed in his Houston appliance store. Ed Marston, 32, was murdered in Irving.

The men had abandoned the Church of the First Born of the Lamb of God, founded by the late Ervil LeBaron. Patricia and William are natural children of LeBaron, and Barlow is his stepson.

Prosecutors claim Ervil LeBaron's writings demanded that those who left the church must die to bring about the "kingdom of God."

"These people killed in the name of God Almighty," prosecutor Mike Shelby said during closing arguments Tuesday.

And the spoils, or tangible goods, went to those who brought on the kingdom, he said.

"This man (Ervil LeBaron) was obsessed that these people die because they left his church," Shelby said.

In the 14-count indictment, the three are accused of various charges, including murder-for-hire in the men's deaths and tampering with a federal witness in the girl's slaying.

Prosecutors claimed the promise of gaining

worldly goods constitutes murder-for-hire.

But Tom Berg, William LeBaron's attorney, argued the slayings were an act of revenge for years of abuse the defendants suffered while their father was in prison. LeBaron died in 1981 in prison.

The defendants were "enslaved," forced to work long hours and threatened with death if they disobeyed, he said.

"They were murdered for what they did to these children and their families," Berg added.

Defense attorneys also questioned the testimony of Cynthia LeBaron, who was granted immunity and is part of the federal witness protection program.

Three others also were indicted last summer, including Aaron Morel LeBaron, 24, and Jacqueline LeBaron, 26, who are believed to be in Mexico.

Last October, Richard LeBaron, 21, pleaded guilty to charges of tampering with a witness and interstate travel to commit murder for hire in Duane Chynoweth's death. His sentencing is set for Jan. 26.

As part of a plea agreement, federal prosecutors have agreed to recommend Richard LeBaron for the federal witness protection program.

Student notes similarity of slayings with book

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

GRAYSON, Ky. — An honor student accused of fatally shooting a teacher and janitor at a high school had written a book report on a Stephen King novel in which

a student shoots a teacher and holds a class hostage, a classmate said.

Classes were canceled Tuesday at East Carter High School, while authorities tried to figure out what provoked the student, who held a class hostage during Monday's

rampage.

Scott Pennington, 17, was charged with two capital murder charges and 22 counts of kidnapping in the 15-minute standoff.

At an arraignment Tuesday, District Judge William Woods set a Feb. 5 hearing to decide whether

Pennington will be tried as an adult.

Prosecutors said they intend to seek adult status.

Pennington was transferred to a juvenile detention center outside the county, said state police Trooper Gary Kistner.

Houston plaza air conditioner cools skyscraper without environmentally harmful refrigerant

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

HOUSTON — The air conditioning system in a Houston skyscraper on Tuesday became the world's first in a high-rise building to be completely converted to environmentally correct refrigerants.

The 52-story Texaco Heritage Plaza had been using a refrigerant known as CFC-11, which will be banned later this decade under a U.S. Clean Air Act provision that prohibits manufacture of such chlorofluorocarbons.

CFCs are molecules containing chlorine, fluorine and carbon atoms.

They were thought to be harmless until the 1970s when researchers found the chlorine atoms were breaking down the ozone that shields Earth from

dangerous ultraviolet rays.

In renovations that began in April 1991 and completed Tuesday, the Texaco Heritage Plaza's three chilling units now are equipped with HCFC-123, a refrigerant that is accepted by the Environmental Protection Agency and international agencies.

HCRC-123 is considered 20 times less harmful to the earth's ozone layer than CFC-11.

"There are about 80,000 chillers (across North America) that will have to be converted," R.O. Hunton, president and chief executive officer of Houston Trane, a major air conditioning manufacturer, said.

"Other owners are going to have to do this soon. If they don't, they're going to wind up rushing at the last minute to try to achieve these types of conversions because these chillers are going to

have to be converted."

Larry Siegel, a Trane vice president, said it was fitting that the ceremonies marking the first conversion project were being held on the eve of the inauguration of Sen. Al Gore as vice president.

Gore is author of a book in which he describes ozone depletion as a top environmental concern.

"What we're witnessing here today is a response to Vice President Gore's plea," Siegel said.

"What this means is we do have facilities to change out these CFCs and the means to convert what is very, very harmful to the ozone."

This is the first of thousands of conversions that will have to be made in the coming decade.

Building and air conditioning company executives went to the equipment room on the top level of the skyscraper where a switch

was turned on to bring the third and final chilling unit to life.

Centrifugal chillers produce chilled water for circulation through a building's air conditioning system. The CFCs aid in the cooling process.

At the building in Houston, considered the world's most air-conditioned city, the three 1,050-ton compressors were dismantled and sent to a Trane plant.

Siegel said the renovation cost only about 25 to 30 percent of the expense that would have been incurred if the building management had merely replaced the three air conditioning chillers, which cost about \$250,000 each plus another \$100,000 to install.

"We got all three done for less than that," said Roma Kirkland, operations manager for Coventry Management Systems, which manages the building.

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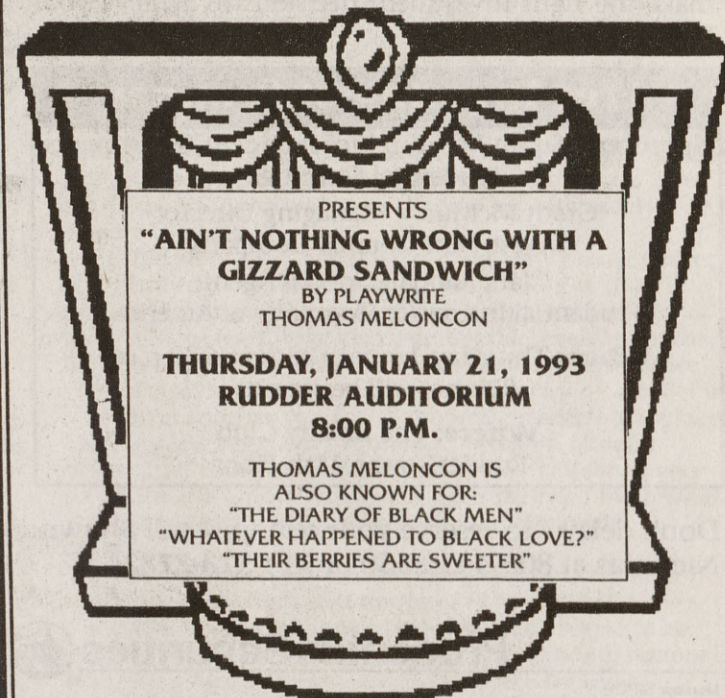
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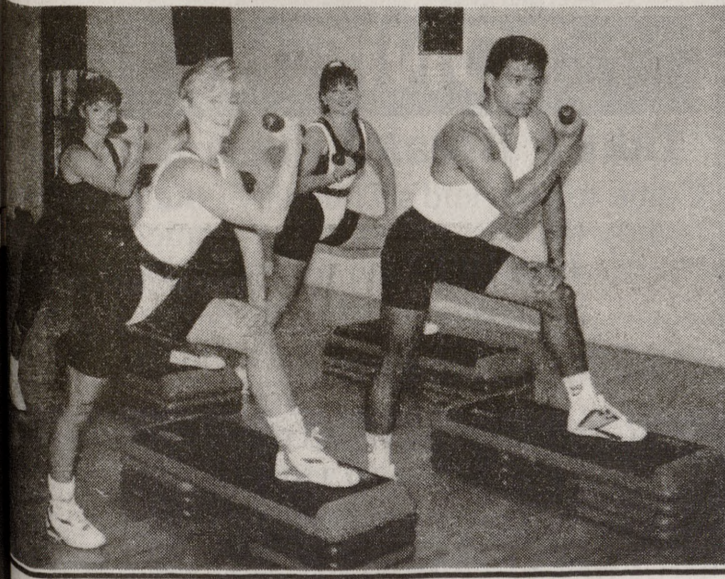
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