

Jury convicts sect members

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

HOUSTON — Three members of a radical polygamist group were convicted Wednesday of civil rights violations and other federal charges in the 1988 slayings of three former sect members and a young girl.

The defendants each were convicted on nine counts and acquitted on one weapons charge in the killings, which prosecutors claimed were carried out to bring on the "kingdom of God."

However, the jury said it had not yet reached a decision on four charges alleging conspiracy and murder-for-hire.

U.S. District Judge Simeon Lake urged the jurors to go back and try to reach a verdict on the remaining charges.

Jurors deliberated for about an hour before telling the judge they wanted to review some testimony.

The judge let them go home for the day, telling them to return Thursday morning when the requested evidence would be available.

William Heber LeBaron, 28, Patricia LeBaron, 27, and Douglas Lee Barlow, 31, were convicted of charges stemming from the July 27, 1988, fatal shootings, which occurred almost simultaneously in three locations.

The three were found guilty of several charges, including tampering with a witness, conspiracy, a weapon's violation and interfering with a person's religious beliefs. They also were convicted of the Racketeering Influenced Corrupt Organizations Act.

Prosecutor Mike Shelby said it was the first time in the nation the obstruction charge has been used since enacted June 24, 1988 — just three days before the murders.

The law, part of the hate crimes legislation, makes it illegal to obstruct a person's right to practice their religion.

So far, each defendant faces up to life in prison without parole, plus 25 years, when sentenced by the judge.

Jennifer Chynoweth, 8, her father, Duane Chynoweth, 31, his brother, Mark Chynoweth, 36, and Ed Marston, 32, were gunned down at three sites in Houston and suburban Dallas.

The three men had been targeted for death because they left the Church of the First Born of the Lamb of God, founded by the late polygamist leader Ervil LeBaron, prosecutors said. The girl was killed because she was a witness to her father's death, they said.

"I'm in shock. I'm happy for what they got. I'm relieved," said

a smiling Laura Chynoweth, whose husband and daughter were killed.

She said the case was especially painful since she had known the defendants for years, and once considered them part of her family.

"I feel a lot for them (the defendants).

I still have good memories from the past," she said. "But I know that they killed."

The defendants showed little emotion when the partial verdict was read.

"We have prepared them for a verdict like this," said defense attorney Tom Berg, who represents William Heber LeBaron.

Berg and the other two defense attorneys said they planned to appeal.

Patricia and William are the natural children of Ervil LeBaron, and Barlow is his stepson.

In all, LeBaron had 54 children by 13 wives.

Prosecutors said Ervil LeBaron's writings promised that the group members who killed those who had abandoned the church would help bring on the kingdom of God and would inherit the world's riches. The government claimed the promise of gaining worldly goods constitutes murder-for-hire.

Defense attorneys hardly disputed their clients were involved in the killings. But they argued the slayings were more of an act of revenge for years of abuse they suffered as children at the hands of the three men who were murdered.

The jury spent about eight hours deliberating on Tuesday and Wednesday before delivering the partial verdict. The trial began Jan. 11 and included testimony from Cynthia LeBaron, who described how the defendants and others plotted the attacks and agreed to kill any witness over age 4.

Cynthia LeBaron, who was granted immunity, said she called Douglas Barlow at a pay phone in Irving, giving him the go-ahead to kill Marston while William Heber LeBaron was attacking Mark Chynoweth at his Houston appliance store.

Richard LeBaron, then 17, was sent to kill Duane and Jenny Chynoweth, and Patricia LeBaron went along "so Richard wouldn't back out at the last minute," she testified.

Richard LeBaron pleaded guilty last summer to charges in the deaths of Duane and Jennifer Chynoweth and is awaiting sentencing. Two other group members have been indicted, but are believed to be in Mexico.

Serbs accept plan to end war

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PALE, Bosnia-Herzegovina — An assembly of Bosnian Serbs on Wednesday accepted a plan to end Bosnia's civil war, but what appeared to be a step toward peace may be little more than a tactical maneuver.

While giving the international community the "yes" it sought for the peace plan, the Serbs also insisted on the right to self-determination.

The Serbs' foes have tentatively accepted the plan.

The international community had told Bosnia's Serbs to accept the plan unconditionally or risk further isolation and possible military intervention.

Rejection would have doomed the peace talks and increased fighting.

Warfare appeared to ease throughout Bosnia on Wednesday, but Muslim-led government forces captured the Jezero hill in eastern Bosnia after four days of bitter fighting.

Serbs fighters had to withdraw over the

Drina River into the neighboring republic of Serbia, the Belgrade-based Tanjug news agency reported.

The Muslims can use the hill to control a large area on the Drina River border with Serbia.

Lord Owen of the European Community, who with U.N. envoy Cyrus Vance drafted the peace plan, welcomed the Bosnian Serbs' decision.

Kemal Muftic, a top aide to Bosnia's Muslim president, Alija Izetbegovic, said Serbs accepted the peace plan because they were under pressure.

"Our experience so far tells us that whatever they agree to, it means nothing on the ground," he said.

The Serb decision to accept the plan was made by their self-declared parliament, which met in Pale, the Serb military headquarters just east of Sarajevo.

The vote was 55-12 with one abstention. The assembly has 81 seats, but most of the missing lawmakers did not travel to Pale.

"The Serb side is ready for an immediate

cease-fire including Sarajevo," said Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic.

He said his self-declared Serb republic would continue to exist "until the Serbian people decide otherwise," and emphasized the vote did not mean full agreement with the Vance-Owen plan.

The Serb assembly "opted for the immediate ending of the war and for peace and negotiations," said a statement issued after the vote.

It added: "We keep the right of self-determination."

The wording suggested Bosnian Serbs have not given up their goal of joining Serb-held territory in Bosnia with neighboring Serbia to create a "greater Serbia." Vance and Owen have rejected that option.

Support for the idea that Bosnia will be a single state represents only the first phase of any settlement of the civil war.

The harder part of the negotiations involves maps dividing Bosnia into 10 largely autonomous provinces.

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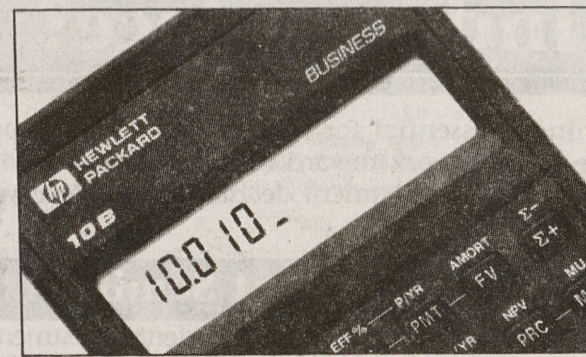
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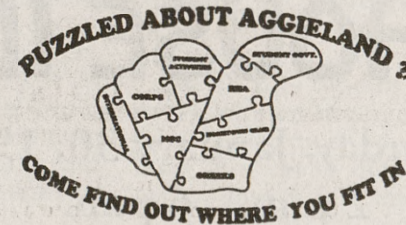
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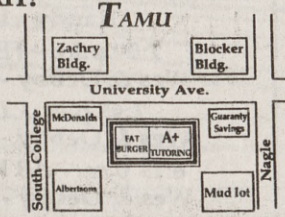
Mr. Bill's Classes	Time	Mon 1/25	Tue 1/26	Wed 1/27	Thr 1/28
PHYSICS 218	5-7 p.m.	Chapters 1 & 2	Chapters 17 & 18	Chapter 5	Test I Review
CHEMISTRY 102	7-9 p.m.	Chapter 15 Thermodynamics	Chapter 15 & 16 Kinetics	Chapter 16 Kinetics	Test I Review
PHYSICS 202	9-11 p.m.	Chapter 24	Chapter 25	Chapter 26	Chapter 27
CHEMISTRY 101	11-1 a.m.	Chapter 2	Chapter 3	Chapter 4	Test II Review

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