

Conspirators denied bond

Three accused of plotting to bomb gas plant held without bail

FORT WORTH (AP) — Three people accused of plotting to bomb a natural gas processing plant to kill police and divert attention from an armored-car heist were ordered held without bond Monday.

Shawn Dee Adams, 37; his 35-year-old wife, Catherine Dee Adams; and 34-year-old Edward Taylor Jr. are charged with conspiracy to commit robbery affecting interstate commerce. They have not been indicted.

Their attorneys argued that the trio had ties to the community, had little or no criminal records and would not pose a danger if they were released. Warren St. John, Mrs. Adams' attorney, said it was unfair for them to be held while the government does its homework... while government figures out what the law violation is."

However, U.S. Magistrate Charles Bleil apparently was swayed by testimony from Dallas police detective Charles Storey, who was assigned to the FBI's joint terrorism task force and laid out the government's case.

"The evidence brought out against them in

the probable cause hearing appears to be pretty great and the court is bound to consider... the defendants were prepared to commit acts that could cause loss of life to people and they seem to have little if any concern about that," Bleil said during a preliminary hearing that also involved the suspects' detention.

"If they can do it in the movies, we can do it."

Catherine Dee Adams
Accused conspirator

A detention hearing for co-defendant Carl "Jay" Waskom Jr., 34, was continued until Tuesday afternoon.

Federal officials contend the suspects intended to set off several bombs at the Mitchell Energy & Development Corp. plant in Bridgeport to divert attention from their robbery of an armored car they believed would be carrying \$2 million to a bank in nearby Chico.

While Storey was on the witness stand to detail the case, he also testified about the validity of a videotape of three of the defendants made secretly from the glove box of an informant's pickup truck. U.S. Attorney Richard Roper showed

about 15 minutes of the tape, which was made about midday April 22 prior to their arrests.

The Adamses and Taylor reportedly are heard on the tape discussing their plans to bomb the plant. Waskom is not on the tape.

Adams suggests that it might take three or four days for law enforcers to control the mass destruction they unleashed. Then Taylor says, "It might take them that long to get the casualties out."

During a discussion about the best time to detonate the bombs, Adams expresses concern that doing it too early might shut down the road and prevent the armored car from getting to the bank. He suggests they overtake the drivers at a gun barrel at the back of their heads," he said.

"Then Catherine Adams adds: "If they can do it in the movies, we can do it."

Taylor, who has been identified by authorities as a member of a faction of the Ku Klux Klan, and the Adamses were arrested in Wise County; Waskom was arrested the same day in Fort Worth.

Federal officials said the suspects had been under surveillance for about six weeks after officials received a tip from an informant.

Agency reports drop in violent crime

AUSTIN (AP) — Violent crime in Texas decreased last year, despite a 2.6 percent increase in overall crime, the Department of Public Safety reported Monday.

The murder rate in Texas dropped to seven per 100,000 people in 1996, the lowest since 1965's 7.5 per 100,000. The total number of murders in 1996 was 1,476, a 12.9 percent decrease from 1995.

"Except for a slight increase in the number of aggravated assaults (0.2 percent) reported, all categories of violent crime were down nearly 1 percent last year," said Col. Dudley M. Thomas, DPS Director.

Property crimes, including burglary, theft and motor vehicle theft, rose 3 percent from 1995 to 1996

and pushed up the overall crime rate, according to the DPS Uniform Crime Reporting records.

The other index crimes, and percentage change in total number reported in 1996, are:

- Rape, down 1.8 percent.
- Aggravated assault, up 0.2 percent.
- Robbery, down 2.6 percent.
- Burglary, up 0.8 percent.
- Motor vehicle theft, down 0.01 percent.

Taken together, the number of all index crimes reported for 1996 was 1,091,878. That was a 2.6 percent increase from 1995.

The index crime rate, or number of major crimes committed per 100,000 population, rose 0.4 percent

overall to 5,708.3, the DPS reported.

The crime rate dropped in every major category, except property crime, which rose 0.9 percent.

The estimated value of property taken during the commission of index crimes in 1996 was more than \$1.3 billion. Law enforcement agencies recovered \$547 million in stolen property.

The number of arrests of juveniles increased 1.7 percent, according to DPS.

"While the number of crimes was up last year, so was the number of arrests made by Texas law enforcement officers," Thomas said.

Overall arrests were up 1.4 percent while drug arrests were up 4.5 percent.

The state's uniform crime reporting program also collects information on hate crimes, which increased 7.7 percent in 1996 to 350, and family violence reports, which went up 3.4 percent to 178,389.

Hate crimes are defined as those motivated by prejudice and hatred and can be based on race, religion, ethnicity or sexual orientation.

The largest percentage of hate crimes reports were racial in nature, while the second most commonly reported motivation was sexual orientation, according to DPS.

Of family violence crimes, assaults account for 98 percent of all offenses, according to the agency.

SEPARATISTS

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The group's members contend they are the legitimate government of Texas, which they say was illegally annexed as a state in 1845. Texas was an independent republic from 1836 to 1845.

McLaren's news release called on Texans to push for a referendum to decide whether they want to become an independent nation.

"I hope this unfortunate incident will be used to reach more people as to what their Constitution is about, and that their government officials are wrong and about human rights."

He has compared his situation to deadly government standoffs at Arco, Texas and Ruby Ridge, Idaho. Members have waged what legislators term "paper terrorism" by filing bogus liens against Texans and public officials.

For months, bodyguards have protected McLaren as he holed up in the Davis Mountains while deputies tried to serve outstanding warrants, one stemming from a burglary charge, another from his failure to appear for a federal court hearing. Authorities have said the warrants are not a top priority.

Captives fear death at hands of invaders

ALPINE (AP) — The West Texas couple held hostage for 12 hours by three armed members of the Republic of Texas said Monday they believed their captors were willing to kill them.

Joe and Margaret Ann Rowe, both 51, said two men and one woman, all dressed in battle-style fatigues, shot their way through their front door about noon Sunday.

"It wasn't an empty threat. If somebody will come shooting in your door, they mean it," Mrs. Rowe said at a news conference Monday outside Big Bend Regional Medical Center.

Wounded in the right shoulder by shrapnel, Rowe was in stable condition Monday at the Alpine hospital. Mrs. Rowe was not injured.

The Rowes were released to Jeff Davis County Sheriff Steve Bailey and two deputies, who were allowed into the house about midnight. In exchange, authorities freed Robert Jonathan Scheidt, a Republic member arrested early Sunday on a weapons violation, Department of Public Safety spokesperson Lauren Chernow said.

"I honestly hated to see the law enforcement give up somebody they had arrested that morning to secure our release," Rowe said.

Rowe and Richard McLaren, the self-styled "ambassador" of the Republic of Texas, have a history of bad blood.

For several years, McLaren has battled his neighbors about the way the Davis Mountain Resort homeowners' association was spending the annual fees it collected from resort lot owners. Rowe has headed the homeowners' association.

Rowe, an outspoken critic of McLaren and the Republic, said he feels authorities must move in on the organization and end the community's problems.

"For the last several months, residents have been hoping some group of law enforcement would go in there," he said.

Mrs. Rowe said she would support bloodshed if it meant eliminating the Republic. "I don't care what happens to them," she said.

The Rowes' home was invaded about noon Sunday, 45 minutes after their son and daughter-in-law left.

Rowe said three invaders, armed with assault-style rifles, crouched behind cars and other cover outside while he stood by his front door with a 9mm pistol, watching them advance. The three called to him that he was under arrest and must surrender.

One man then shot three times, shattering a glass storm door and splintering the front door, the shrapnel wounding Rowe.

Mrs. Rowe said one of the men then stormed the door, pushed his gun barrel in her husband's face and forced Rowe to lay down his pistol.

Rowe said he had "a perfectly good shot" at one of the three, but he did not fire.

"I would have, but to be quite honest I figured if I shot one, I'd never be able to get all three of them," he said.

The Rowes said they were not abused during their captivity and were never bound or otherwise physically restrained. Mrs. Rowe, who is in training as an emergency medical technician, tended to her husband's wounds.

Rowe said the leader of the group claimed to be on a military mission.

Mrs. Rowe said she and her husband spoke with their captors throughout the evening and that she served them leftover lasagna. However, she said neither she nor her husband dined with the trio.

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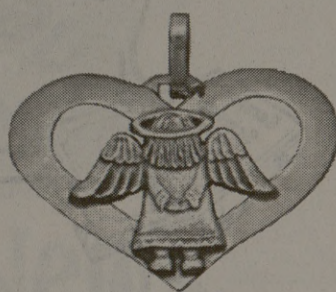
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