

Up on top



BERNARDO GARZA/THE BATTALION

Lorenzo Martinez, a construction laborer for more than 40 years, takes pieces of foam roofing and sends them down a trash shoot on top of the Reed McDonald Building. Martinez and other workers tore off the roofing and prepared a new foam one to prevent leaks.

Plea entered for escaped convict

DALLAS (AP) — An innocent plea was entered Monday for George Rivas, the ringleader of a gang of escaped inmates charged with killing an Irving police officer.

Rivas appeared before District Judge Molly Francis just before the beginning of jury selection in the capital murder case.

District Attorney Bill Hill read the charge against Rivas, who wore a gray suit and glasses, his black hair tinged with blond from bleaching during his escape. When Francis asked for Rivas' plea, lead defense attorney Wayne Huff said, "My client stands mute."

The judge then entered a plea of innocent for the former escapee, who said after his capture that he fired the fatal shots at officer Aubrey Hawkins during a robbery on Christmas Eve.

Jury selection began amid heightened security measures. Additional

bailiffs and sheriff's deputies were assigned, and those entering the courtroom had to pass through a metal detector. Rivas wore an electronic belt around his waist through which deputies could deliver an electric shock if he tried to escape.

Francis plans to poll 420 potential jurors this week, then spend about three weeks individually questioning those who qualify. Two groups of 60 potential panelists received questionnaires from Francis Monday. Five additional groups of 60 also will be brought in this week.

"The media attention has been such that it might be difficult to find someone who hasn't heard something, somewhere," Francis told the group.

"Your verdict must be based on what you hear in court and what witnesses say, not what you may have heard on the news of read in the newspaper," she said.

Insanity defense likely for mother of five children

HOUSTON (AP) — An insanity defense will likely be used for a Houston woman accused of systematically drowning her five young children, her attorney said.

Andrea Yates, 36, was arrested last week in what a prosecutor called "the most horrendous thing that I've ever seen."

Yates told police Wednesday that she drowned her children one by one in a bathtub in their suburban Houston home. Dead are Noah, 7; John, 5; Paul, 3; Luke, 2; and Mary, 6 months.

Yates has been charged with one count of capital murder for

deeply for their patients," he said Monday in a round of network television news show appearances.

Parnham also said Yates, who is on a 24-hour suicide watch in the jail, may have been taken off an anti-psychotic drug by her doctors before the murder of her children.

"We are in the process of obtaining as many medical records as we can," Parnham said. "Obviously, this is important, and the ultimate decision is whether or not to proceed with the defense of insanity."

Yates was a registered nurse from 1986 to 1994 at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, hospital records show.

The youngest of her parents' five children, she spent the most time with her dying father as he battled Alzheimer's disease, a neighbor told the *Houston Chronicle* Sunday.

Parnham told the newspaper, "I've accumulated evidence in the last 24 hours that strongly suggests that the mental status of my client will be the issue, which means entering a not-guilty plea by reason of insanity."

He said he is gathering background on Yates' mental health history before making a final decision on her defense.

Parnham said Monday that what happened in the Yates' home last week "didn't happen in a vacuum." He said potential clues were "ignored, explained away or misdiagnosed," but he said he will not blame others for the deaths.

"Obviously, this is important, and the ultimate decision is whether or not to proceed with the defense of insanity."

— George Parnham
attorney

the deaths of Noah and John. Authorities said other charges might follow.

Houston attorney George Parnham, who represents Yates, said in televised reports Monday that he has met with psychiatrists treating her at the Harris County Jail.

"My observation is that she is still in a very deep psychosis. We are having her treated and examined by very professional mental health experts who care



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