

# Andersen's role in bankruptcy examined

PHOENIX (AP) — Arthur Andersen LLP went on trial Monday for its part in the largest nonprofit bankruptcy in U.S. history — a collapse that left 13,000 investors out of \$570 million two years before the bankruptcy of Enron Corp.

Arizona's attorney general believes that in the Enron case and that of the Baptist Foundation of Arizona, the accounting firm concealed huge losses on financial statements that would have alerted investors to trouble.

Jury selection in the Baptist Foundation case began in Phoenix Monday and opening arguments were expected Tuesday. It is the first of several cases against Andersen.

Andersen had reached a \$217 million settlement on March 1 with investors of the failed religious foundation, but it fell through March 29 when Andersen said its insurance carrier, Professional Services Insurance Co., could not pay.

The settlement was to resolve a case brought by a bankruptcy trust for foundation investors suing Andersen in Maricopa County Superior Court for \$150 million in compensatory damages and more in punitive damages.

Now the action is back on schedule, said trust

attorney Sean Coffey. The trial is expected to last two or three months, attorneys said.

"It's been brutally hard for all sides involved," Coffey said. "We look forward to bringing justice to the innocent BFA investors who have certainly found themselves on a roller coaster ride these last few months."

An Andersen attorney said the firm is ready for its day in court.

"We're prepared and ready for trial and looking forward to the opportunity to finally put Andersen's story before a jury trial," said attorney Ed Novak.

Forrest Bomar, a 73-year-old Baptist retiree from Palestine, Texas, and his wife, Thelma Lee, lost \$236,000, nearly their entire life savings, when the foundation collapsed.

"On the one hand we were rejoicing if (the settlement) was going to happen, but of course it didn't," said Bomar. "It started my depression and anger and feeling of betrayal all over again. If I were not so far away, I would be in the courtroom every day."

The Baptist Foundation was created in 1948 as a nonprofit religious entity to raise money for Southern Baptist causes.

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— Ed Novak  
Andersen attorney

# Colorado Supreme Court rules foot a deadly weapon

DENVER (AP) — A foot can become a deadly weapon, the Colorado Supreme Court ruled Monday, overturning a lower court's decision.

"Objects which are not inherently deadly, such as feet and hands, can become deadly weapons when used to start an unbroken, foreseeable chain of events capable of producing serious bodily injury or death," the Supreme Court said Monday.

The ruling came in the case of Christopher Saleh, who was

convicted of reckless assault with a deadly weapon for kicking his girlfriend, Janise Apodaca, down a flight of stairs in 1998. She suffered a broken wrist, a sprained ankle and a fractured pelvis and was hospitalized for six weeks.

An appeals court overturned the conviction and ruled it was third-degree assault, reasoning that the foot must be the instrument that caused the serious bodily injury in order to qualify as a deadly weapon.

The Supreme Court said

Colorado law defines a deadly weapon as a firearm (loaded or unloaded), a knife, a bludgeon or "any other weapon, device, instrument, material or substance, whether animate or inanimate."

The Supreme Court said it ruled in a 1980 case that a whiskey bottle could be a deadly weapon, and in 1970 the law applied to a shoe.

"Body parts can be deadly weapons depending upon the manner in which they are used," the court said.

# Teen couple abducted, girlfriend's body found

MIAMI BEACH Fla. (AP) — Police found a body Monday they believe is that of a teen-ager abducted with her boyfriend on South Beach by five armed men as the couple celebrated five months together.

The boyfriend was treated for stab wounds.

"Tentatively, we can say we do have a match," said Maria Maugham, a spokesperson for the Boca Raton Police Department.

Five men were taken into custody Monday, but police would not release details.

Ana Maria Angel and her boyfriend, Eddy Portoblanco, both 18, were returning from a beach stroll early Sunday.

Five armed men forced them into a white Ford pickup truck and sped off, police spokesperson Bobby Hernandez said.

A body found 40 miles to the north, off Interstate 95, was preliminarily identified as Angel's. Maugham said the physical description and clothing of the body matched that of the young woman.

Portoblanco was beaten and stabbed before he was dumped about two hours after the abduction in suburban Fort Lauderdale, about 35 miles north of South Beach.

He flagged down a car for help and was taken to a hospital, where he was treated and released, police said.

Two transactions were made with Angel's ATM card at two downtown Miami gas stations after the abduction, police said.

Angel and Portoblanco, both seniors, attended South Miami High School. They were on a date celebrating five months of going steady, her family said.

A family friend said Angel's mother, Margarita Osorio, was told by police early Monday of her daughter's death.

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Trial starts for prison escapee

MOUNT VERNON, Texas (AP) — A man who escaped from a Texas prison with six fellow inmates never intended to kill a police officer, defense attorneys said as the inmate's trial opened Monday.

Prosecutors predicted during opening statements that Michael Rodriguez's own words will show his guilt in the death of Aubrey Hawkins.

The 29-year-old rookie officer was shot 11 times and run over twice while trying to stop the Christmas Eve 2000 robbery of an Oshman's Sporting Goods in Irving.

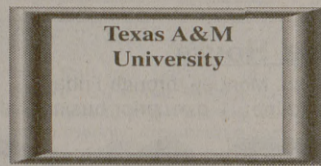
The store was allegedly robbed by Rodriguez and six other inmates after they escaped from a South Texas prison on Dec. 13. The seven are accused of stealing \$70,000 and a large cache of weapons, then leading authorities on a nationwide manhunt.

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