

News Digest

By The Associated Press

Officials suspect Tylenol death was murder

YONKERS, N.Y. — A woman who died of cyanide poisoning after taking Tylenol capsules, leading thousands of stores nationwide to take them off their shelves, was murdered by someone who placed the poison inside the package within the last 10 days, a county official said Tuesday.

"We are dealing with a case of murder," Westchester County Executive Andrew O'Rourke said at a news conference. No one has been charged in the death of Diane Elsroth, 23, of Peekskill.

The potassium-cyanide would eat

through a gelatin capsule in eight to 10 days, said County Chief Medical Examiner Dr. Millard Hyland, who appeared with O'Rourke. He did not pinpoint when the cyanide was introduced into the capsules.

And Joseph Valiquette, an FBI-spokesman in New York, said his agency's investigation indicated the poison was placed only in the box of Extra-Strength Tylenol from which the victim took a capsule.

Hyland said the type of cyanide used is "difficult to purchase, a dangerous

substance," and is used in photography and the manufacture of tools and dyes.

Homicide investigators had asked the FBI to determine when someone tampered with the package. "We have to find out if the tampering occurred pre-sealing or post-sealing before we decide our next step," said Bruce Bendish, chief of the Westchester County district attorney's homicide squad.

Johnson & Johnson, maker of Tylenol, has been sealing the necks and caps of Tylenol bottles and packing each bottle in sealed boxes since the unsolved

case in which seven Tylenol users were killed by cyanide in the Chicago area in 1982.

FBI spokesman Bob Long said in Chicago there's no evidence to indicate any link between the New York death and those in 1982. One FBI agent in Chicago still is assigned to the 1982 Tylenol case, he said. "We still have an open case, but it's not actively pursued," he said.

Authorities announced Monday that Elsroth had been fatally poisoned by cyanide after taking Tylenol on Satur-

day. Three other capsules in the bottle she used contained the poison, officials said.

Yonkers Deputy Police Chief Owen McClain said there were no suspects in Elsroth's killing and added: "There is no reason to believe the victim was the target, but we have not ruled out the possibility."

Johnson & Johnson, the New Brunswick, N.J.-based manufacturer of Tylenol, said the batch in question was ADF916, with a May 1987 expiration date.

Free at last Shcharansky goes home

TEL AVIV, Israel — Anatoly Shcharansky, the Soviet human rights activist imprisoned for nine years as a spy, was freed on a snowy Berlin bridge Tuesday and flown to a tumultuous, emotional welcome in Israel.

The 38-year-old Jewish dissident had become known as the "prisoner of Zion," a focus for international Jewry and symbol of Jews who are not allowed to leave the Soviet Union.

Also included in the East-West prisoner exchange on Berlin's Glienicke Bridge were five people held in the West on spy charges and three held in the East.

Shcharansky was freed first, apart from the others, to emphasize the U.S. insistence that he was not a spy. He was arrested in 1977 and a Soviet court convicted him of spying for the CIA, sentencing him in 1978 to 13 years imprisonment.

Prime Minister Shimon Peres and Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir embraced Shcharansky as he and his wife, Avital, who met him in Frankfurt, stepped from the Israeli executive jet at Ben-Gurion Airport. The ceremony was broadcast live on radio and television.

"How are you?" Peres asked. "Everything is OK," Shcharansky said. They spoke in Hebrew.

Shcharansky clasped his hands above his head in victory, then held hands with Avital as she introduced him to Cabinet members, helping him with his Hebrew. For more than a decade she has lived in Israel and campaigned for his freedom.

About 3,000 people gathered outside the terminal building cheered and waved as the Shcharanskys and Peres went inside to telephone President Reagan.

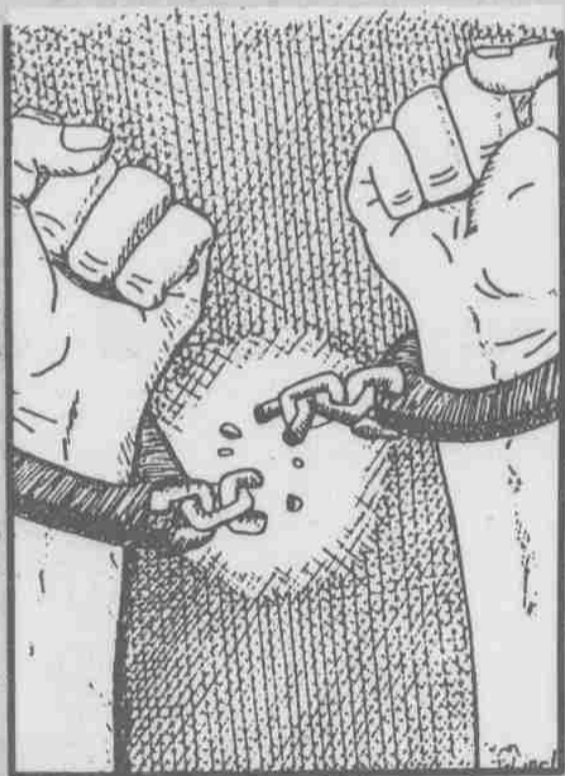
"We thanked him for his tireless efforts out of a deep feeling for the Jewish people and an inner conviction that the Jewish people deserve to leave the Soviet Union," the prime minister said.

The 45-minute prisoner exchange was the latest of several on the Glienicke Bridge, a green metal structure across the Havel

River between West Berlin and Potsdam in communist East Germany. This one came 24 years and a day after American U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers and Kremlin master spy Rudolf Abel were exchanged there.

Snow was falling as Shcharansky crossed, wearing a fur hat and a broad smile.

The snow had been cleared from a 4-inch-wide line in the middle of the bridge that marks the border between East and West. When he saw the line, Shcharansky said in English, "Look, no wall," and took a giant step over it.



He was met by Richard Burt, U.S. ambassador to West Germany, and they shook hands at 10:57 a.m. on the span West Germans call the "bridge of spies." Burt towered over Shcharansky, a small, balding man of 38 who is a computer expert and mathematician.

It was 25 degrees, in an icy river wind, as Burt and Shcharansky walked to a Mercedes limousine and sped toward the wall

that has divided the city since 1961.

The freed prisoner wore baggy trousers, and American sources said his hat and oversize coat were borrowed.

He brought no personal possessions, "no luggage, nothing," said Ludwig Rehlinger, a West German government official who accompanied Burt and was Bonn's negotiator in the exchange.

Shcharansky was not told he would be released until he arrived in East Berlin on Monday, U.S. and West German officials said.

He did not complain of health problems, U.S. officials said. Reports have indicated his health suffered during his time in prison and labor camp.

Mrs. Shcharansky, 34, arrived in Frankfurt only two hours before her husband. She left the Soviet Union soon after their marriage in 1975, with the understanding that he soon would follow, and began her worldwide campaign when the Kremlin refused to let him go.

In Israel, Peres called Shcharansky by his Hebrew name, Natan, and said of him: "He has fought heroically alone against so many tribulations as a proud Jew, as a man with a mission, as a devoted Zionist."

"You can arrest a body, but you cannot imprison a spirit," the prime minister said, adding that Mrs. Shcharansky "fought like a lioness" in her struggle for his freedom.

Shcharansky said to Reagan in the telephone conversation, which was broadcast by Israel television: "I know how great was your role in this greatest event of my and my wife's life. We are very grateful to you for this."

Reagan declared himself "delighted" by Shcharansky's release and at one point said "Mazel tov," Hebrew for congratulations.

A U.S. official in Berlin identified the prisoners freed from the East as Wolf George Frohn of East Germany, Jaroslav Jaworski of Czechoslovakia and Dietrich Nistroy, a West German, all held in East Germany.

Charges against Walesa dropped

GDANSK, Poland — The state dropped slander charges against Solidarity leader Lech Walesa on Tuesday, and Walesa hailed the decision as the first step toward compromise by Poland's Communist government since it crushed the independent trade union.

At the opening day of Walesa's trial, the prosecutor said the 12 election officials who filed the complaint were "satisfied" by Walesa's statement in court that he did not intentionally slander them when he gave voter turnout figures for national elections lower than the official count.

The three-judge panel in Gdansk provincial court suspended the case indefinitely, in effect ending the trial.

Walesa was in high spirits at a news conference after the trial and said he was happy the government recognized that "political trials are not in the interest of Poland."

He called it "the first step toward compromise since the 13th of December," 1981. That was when the government imposed martial law and crushed Solidarity, the first free trade union in the Soviet bloc. Solidarity was outlawed the following year.

Walesa, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1983 for his leadership of Solidarity, had never before been brought to trial although he was interned for 11 months after imposition of martial law.

The case arose from an October parliamentary election boycotted by Solidarity supporters. Solidarity set up its own voter counting operation to counter the government's claim that the elections had wide popular support.

When the government said the turnout was nearly 79 percent, Solidarity issued figures saying only 66 percent of voters went to the polls.

Twelve election officials from six provinces filed suit against Walesa charging him with slander and the government prosecutor took up the case "in the public interest."

Reagan to send diplomat to Philippines

WASHINGTON — President Reagan said Tuesday night the United States is neutral in the bitter Philippines presidential election, and announced plans to send veteran U.S. diplomat Philip Habib to Manila to "help nurture the hopes and possibilities of democracy."

"We're neutral, and we then hope to have the same relationship with the people of the Philippines that we've had all these years," the president said at a nationally televised news conference.

Reagan added that the administration is concerned "about the violence that was evident there and the possibility of fraud. It could have been all of that was occurring on both sides."

Reagan said he would have no other comment on the election until the ballot count was finished.

Reagan's session with reporters was his first in five weeks and the 34th of his presidency. It was a session dominated from the outset by foreign policy questions.

Asked about the release earlier in the day of Soviet dissident Anatoly Shcharansky, Reagan said he "talked at great length about human rights" with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev at their summit last November. Reagan said he thought there had been an increase in such emigrations since then, and added, "I hope that this is a

beginning sign of what's going to take place."

On another foreign policy issue, the president said the United States' only involvement in the downfall of Haitian President-for-Life Jean Claude Duvalier was in "providing an airplane" to fly him into exile in France. He said Duvalier did not seek advice about his departure, and the United States offered none.

Reagan sidestepped a question of whether the United States would resume aid to Haiti, suspended because of human rights abuses under the Duvalier regime. "We hope we can be of help" in restoration of democracy

under the new ruling junta, he said.

The president opened his news conference with a pitch for his 1987 fiscal year budget, and took note of critics who say it is "DOA—dead on arrival." He said those critics only want a tax increase to reduce deficits — and said any such increase would be "VOA — vetoed on arrival."

Reagan's comments on the Philippines came with the outcome of the election between President Ferdinand Marcos and challenger Corazon Aquino still in doubt several days after the balloting closed. Each side has claimed victory, and the Marcos-controlled National Assembly is preparing a final, official canvass.

ABC says 'Choices' not an advocacy film

NEW YORK — The ABC movie "Choices" is about a 62-year-old retired judge with moral conflicts. He argues vehemently against an abortion for his unmarried teen-age daughter, then refuses to become a parent again when his second wife accidentally becomes pregnant.

In the film, scheduled for Monday, George C. Scott plays the husband,

Jacqueline Bisset is his wife and Melissa Gilbert is Scott's pregnant daughter. As with many TV films, the choices of the title could also apply to the behind-the-scenes bargaining between the writer and network censors. Judith Parker, the scriptwriter, said it was "like trading baseball cards. They're adamant about one thing, so they take that out, but then give you

something else back."

Parker said she made a movie with a particular point of view, while ABC said it made certain that points of view on abortion were fairly included.

"It is ultimately a pro-choice film, and I hope I made a convincing argument," Parker said. "That's a decision each woman must make for herself."

Alan Wurtzel, ABC's vice president for broadcast standards and practices, agreed that Parker wrote a pro-choice script.

But, having said that, Wurtzel stressed that ABC still made a fair film and met its responsibility as a broadcaster. "Choices" wasn't an advocacy film in which "the filmmaker says this is what you must believe," Wurtzel said.

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