

News Digest

By The Associated Press

In Brief

Dotson to make TV movie

KEENE, N.H. — Gary Dotson, who spent six years in prison on a rape charge later recanted by his accuser, spent the weekend in New Hampshire seeking the woman's OK for a television movie.

Dotson, of Chicago; his wife, Camille; and David Levy, who wants to produce a television movie about the case, met several times with Cathleen Crowell Webb of Jaffrey, the Keene Sentinel reported Monday.

"We are not sure if we were successful in achieving our goal here," Levy said.

Kienast quintuplets learn to drive

NEW YORK — Tuesday was the 17th birthday of the Kienast quintuplets and their mother is laughingly warning everyone to look out because all five will be learning to drive.

"We have braced for the drivers' license era," Peggy Jo Kienast of Bernards Township, N.J., said on CBS-TV's "The Morning Program."

Abby, Amy, Gordon, Sara and Ted, juniors at Ridge High school, had a private birthday party Sunday.

Reagan says "it's possible to forget" authorization of arms shipments

WASHINGTON — President Reagan suggested Tuesday that "it's possible to forget" whether he authorized a 1985 shipment by Israel of U.S. arms to Iran.

At a meeting with business executives, Reagan was asked if he was upset about a report he had been unable to say for sure whether he gave approval for the shipment — the first in a series of clandestine sales of U.S. arms to Tehran, with some proceeds reportedly later diverted to the Nicaraguan Contras.

"I'd like to ask one question of everybody," Reagan said to reporters and to the business group. "Everybody that can remember what they were doing on August 8, 1985, raise your hands."

Surveying the table and finding no arms outstretched, Reagan said quietly, "I think it's possible to forget. Nobody's raised any hands," and chuckled.

The president waved off further questions, saying he would not comment further until after the Tower Commission releases its findings Thursday on the Iran-Contra arms-

and-money scheme.

In other developments on Tuesday:

- Lt. Col. Oliver North, a key figure in the affair, asked a federal court to block the investigation by a special independent counsel.

- The lawsuit said special counsel Lawrence E. Walsh has been granted prosecutorial powers in violation of the Constitution, and that he and his staff are interfering unlawfully with the conduct of foreign policy in their investigation.

- Lawmakers said special congressional panels investigating the affair may vote as early as Thursday to grant immunity from prosecution to several individuals believed able to shed light on what happened.

- Fawn Hall, North's former secretary, who has been reported as telling Walsh's investigators that she destroyed documents, showed up for a brief photo session for news photographers at her lawyer's office, smilingly posing but refusing to comment on the case.

AIDS

Authorities oppose mandatory testing

ATLANTA — Some medical authorities joined gay rights advocates Tuesday in opposing mandatory testing for the AIDS virus, with one expert denouncing tests for all hospital patients as "a dimly disguised maneuver" aimed at eventual forced testing of the entire U.S. population.

Mandatory AIDS tests are "social placebos designed to reassure anxious and frightened people," said Dr. Ron Bayer of New York's Hastings Center. "This is not the time for placebos."

Only widespread changes in sexual behavior and drug use can truly curtail the spread of AIDS, said Bayer, an associate for policy studies at the nonpartisan, nonprofit research organization.

Acquired immune deficiency syndrome, which cripples the body's

immune system, is transmitted most frequently by sex or intravenous drug use.

Bayer commented Tuesday on the first day of a two-day conference on AIDS testing sponsored by the national Centers for Disease Control. The meeting, originally planned as a discussion for a few dozen experts, attracted hundreds of health officials, medical researchers and activists.

The idea of mandatory AIDS testing for hospital patients, pregnant women and engaged couples was criticized as bad medical policy and legally objectionable by gay rights groups, civil libertarians and medical professionals.

CDC officials stressed Tuesday that the CDC is an advisory agency and cannot itself dictate health practices to state agencies. "We're here to discuss

the merit — or lack of merit — of additional AIDS testing," said CDC Director James D. Mason.

The disease has occurred most often to homosexual men and drug abusers, but heterosexual cases now number 4 percent of the reported 30,000 U.S. cases. More than 17,000 AIDS patients in this country have died.

Blood tests to detect AIDS virus have been in use since 1985, most often to screen donated blood. Expanded testing has been advocated as a way of coping with the increasing number of cases spread through heterosexual contact.

"Mandatory testing will chase people away," said Jeff Levi, executive director of the New York-based National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

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