

Worker says he killed wife

MEXICO CITY (AP) -- Ramona Salcido Bojorquez, a California winery worker arrested Wednesday in the slayings of seven people, told Mexican police he killed his wife and a co-worker because he thought they were having an affair, officials said.

"He was arrested before dawn this morning in a surprise roadblock set up by agents fighting the illicit drug trade," said Vicente Mendoza, a spokesman for the attorney general's office.

Salcido, also suspected of killing two daughters, his mother-in-law and two sisters-in-law in a rampage in Sonoma County, Calif., was picked up just outside Guasave, the spokesman said. The village is near Los Mochis, Salcido's hometown in Sinaloa state about 850 miles northwest of Mexico City.

Mendoza said he did not know Salcido's nationality, and U.S. Embassy spokesman Bill Graves said the embassy was not certain whether he was an American citizen.

"He has been arrested at the request of U.S. authorities who have asked for his extradition. We are bringing him to Mexico City," Mendoza said, adding that Salcido was in the custody of the Federal Judicial Police, a branch of the attorney general's office.

He said Salcido would be taken to Mexico City for an extradition hearing.

Salcido told Mexican police he went on the rampage in a fit of jealousy after suspecting that his wife of five years was having an affair with one of his co-workers, Tracy Toovey, Coello said.

Salcido was arrested the same day services were being held in Petaluma, Calif., for some of the six members of Salcido's family who were killed.

Congress: Spill response was like 'Keystone Kops'

WASHINGTON (AP) -- Transportation Secretary Samuel Skinner told the Senate Wednesday that industry plans for dealing with an Alaskan oil spill had been a "zero." One senator said the initial response to the March 24 disaster reminded him of "the Keystone Kops."

Most witnesses before the Senate's environmental protection subcommittee - from federal officials to Alaska's governor and industry executives - said plans for dealing with a spill of oil from the Alaskan pipeline had not imagined an accident on the magnitude of the 10-million-gallon spill that soiled pristine Prince William Sound.

Skinner, asked to evaluate the plan developed by a consortium of oil companies that ship oil from Alaska's North slope through the pipeline and Valdez harbor, said the document should not have been approved by the state and should have brought warnings from the federal government that the plan was inadequate.

"On the scale of one to 10, it was a zero," Skinner said of the standby procedures.

The secretary told the panel that, before the tanker Exxon Valdez grounded, everyone had "assumed that this would never happen."

"I don't think anybody was ready to deal with a spill of this magnitude," said Skinner, whose department oversees the Coast Guard.

The subcommittee's chairman, Sen. Max Baucus, D-Mont., complained that "there has never been a time when this situation was under control."

He said the response to the spill had demonstrated "a complete breakdown" of the procedures that were supposed to have been in effect since the federal government approved the Alaskan pipeline 16 years ago.

Alaska Gov. Steve Lowerer blamed complacency at all levels for the poor preparedness, but also said that there had not been adequate equipment on hand, that channels of authority were unclear, and that a lack of leadership and direct on in the

critical hours after the spill further delayed cleanup efforts.

He suggested that Alaskans had trusted the oil industry, which accounts for 85 percent of the state government's revenue, to take precautions. "We feel like we've been assaulted," he told the senators.


"From all accounts, the cleanup crews initially responding to this spill acted more like the Keystone Kops than the well-trained oil spill response team described in the industry's contingency plan," declared Sen. John Chafee, R-R.I.

Skinner said the Bush administration's decision to leave the primary responsibility for the cleanup in Exxon's hands stemmed from a belief that the company had committed itself to the cleanup and "had the technical expertise to deal with the problem." He said he has been "disappointed" that the giant oil company has not been able to assemble resources more effectively to better protect the Alaska coastline.


William D. Stevens, president of Exxon Company USA, denied that his company has been slow in responding to the crisis, but acknowledged that the industry's preparedness was inadequate. This type of accident was "so highly unlikely that the consequences of it... were viewed as acceptable," he told the subcommittee.

Sen. Ted Stevens, R-Alaska, said that the effects of the spill will last many years and that the price tag could exceed \$1 billion. Suggesting that many Americans still cannot comprehend the extent of damage, he said the area touched by contamination is the size of three of the Great Lakes and that if the spill had occurred in Portland, Maine, the oil today "would be almost down to Washington, D.C."

Some members of the committee complained about President Bush's reaction, with Majority Leader George Mitchell of Maine saying Bush had been "slow to comprehend the magnitude of this disaster."



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