

Bakker convicted of conspiracy, fraud

CHARLOTTE, N.C. -- TV evangelist Jim Bakker was convicted Thursday of fleecing his followers of \$3.7 million so that he could surround himself with everything from Rolls-Royces to gold-plated swan-shaped bathroom fixtures.

A federal jury deliberated a day and a half before convicting Bakker on all 24 counts of fraud and conspiracy for overselling time shares, or "partnerships," at his ministry's resort hotels to loyal followers of his PTL empire.

The 49-year-old preacher could receive up to 120 years in prison and \$5 million in fines. A sentencing date was not immediately set.

Prosecutors said Bakker diverted the money to live in high style, buying fancy cars, lavish homes, Rolex watches, diamonds, an air-con-

ditioned doghouse and furnishings ranging from gigantic walk-in closets and motorized bedroom drapes.

'I believe he began in earnest...But eventually the money became too much for him.'

--Hill

Bakker and his wife, Tammy, showed little emotion as the verdict was read. Mrs. Bakker was not charged in the case.

"The prosecution did an excellent job. We kept looking for something from the defense

and we never saw it," said jury foreman Ricky Hill.

"His testimony did not weigh on me one bit," the foreman said. "I believe he began in earnest. He was called by God. But eventually the money became too much for him."

"He was a man of God," Hill added. "He got corrupt and I feel sorry for the man."

As they awaited the verdict in the courtroom Thursday morning, several Bakker supporters held Bibles opened to Psalm 17, which reads: "Thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing."

Prosecutors contended that Bakker raised \$158 million by selling "lifetime partnerships" at his Heritage USA retreat near Fort Mill, S.C., but used the money for projects other than the lodging he promised. Partners typically paid \$1,000 for the promise of three

nights' lodging annually at the theme park. Bakker resigned from the ministry in 1987 in a sex and money scandal.

"You can't lie to people to send you money -- it's that simple," prosecutor Deborah Smith told the jury.

"You can't tell half-truths. If you do it, if you use the postal service and the public airwaves you will find yourself in federal court answering charges of mail and wire fraud. That's why we're here today, because that's just what Mr. Bakker did."

Bakker's attorneys said he was a victim of circumstances and a minister worried about the survival of his church.

"I think 95 percent of the evidence in this case by the government is circumstantial," defense attorney George Davis said.

Noriega: Opposition leader 'screwed'

PANAMACITY, Panama -- Eight armed men in civilian clothes fired in the air outside the office where opposition leader Guillermo Endara was on a hunger strike Thursday, dispersing scores of supporters gathered outside.

Some of the gunmen entered Endara's office and took his secretary with them, but the secretary was later released.

"At 4 p.m. armed civilians came and fired in the air," Endara told journalists after the eight gunmen left. "It was as if they were invisible because the police (directing traffic at a nearby corner) did nothing."

The former opposition presidential candidate said he would continue his 16-day-old hunger strike as part of a campaign to oust Gen. Manuel

Antonio Noriega.

Noriega survived a coup attempt Tuesday, and in a televised speech Thursday he said he had evidence the United States planned to install Endara as president after the coup.

"This hunger-striking buffoon sneaks out to eat (Tuesday) so he can be well fed when he takes over the presidency. But he's screwed," Noriega said.

Noriega said he was going to present his hand-picked provisional president, Francisco Rodriguez, with a package of "war laws" dealing with security because Panama is living "in a moment of emergency."

Noting that U.S. troops stood by and watched as the rebellion failed, Noriega said the United States "left

its agents in the lurch." He said the bungled coup was another Bay of Pigs for the United States, referring to the CIA-supported invasion of Cuba that failed in 1961.

"They mistakenly believed that everyone has a price and that everyone is a traitor," he said in a speech from the provincial town of Santiago.

The civilian opposition and the United States have denied any role in the coup attempt.

The United States recognizes Endara as the legitimate president because of his victory in May 7 elections that were annulled by Noriega.

Endara was drinking only water, taking prescribed medicine and eating only the wafer of Mass, but he appeared healthy.

E. Germans left behind fight for freedom

HOF, West Germany -- Freedom trains brought 7,600 East Germans to the West on Thursday after a slow, cold trip that witnesses said was disrupted when thousands left behind fought police in an attempt to board the locked cars.

More than 600 more East Germans were heading for sanctuary in West Germany from Poland.

The refugees who reached this town Thursday from Prague, Czechoslovakia, had spent up to 14 hours locked in unheated East German trains. Many had long waits outside the West German Embassy in Prague for a chance to get in and join the exodus.

"We spent the night outside the gate," said Guido Albrecht, 26, of Potsdam. "It was really cold, but we kept hoping we'd get in. We were ready to stay longer if necessary."

Compassionate gestures by Czechoslovak civilians made things easier. Many brought chocolate for the children or gave hot tea to people sitting in the cold. As the East Germans boarded buses for the railroad station, crowds gathered to applaud and wave.

Eighteen East Germans voluntar-

ily left the U.S. Embassy Wednesday evening after a 31-hour occupation.

The mass departure came on the eve of Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev's arrival in East Germany for weekend celebrations marking the communist country's 40th anniversary.

Gorbachev is expected to ask the aging leaders, who have resisted his reforms, what they plan to do about a flight to the West that is draining much of the strict East German regime's work force.

Extra police were posted in East Berlin, especially outside Western diplomatic missions, to prevent pro-democracy protests during the Gorbachev visit.

In Prague, about 200 East Germans who stayed behind left the West German Embassy late Thursday, heading home with promises from their government of legal emigration within months.

Czechoslovak police sealed off the embassy to stop any more East Germans from reaching it. East Germany restricted travel to Czechoslovakia earlier this week.

East Germans began making their

way west through Hungary when that communist country removed obstacles from its border with Austria in May. Since Hungary made the traffic legal Sept. 10, more than 40,000 East Germans have used that route to West Germany, which grants them automatic citizenship and helps them start new lives.

Nearly 7,000 more East Germans arrived in West Germany last weekend from Warsaw and Prague, where they had taken refuge in West German embassies.

Before the latest trains passed through East Germany late Wednesday and early Thursday, thousands of people chanting "We want out!" lined the tracks and flocked to stations in hopes of jumping aboard.

Police in Dresden, East Germany, reportedly used clubs and water cannons to drive crowds back from the main railroad station.

"It was a horrible scene," said a woman from Dresden who asked not to be identified because she feared reprisals. "People were trying desperately to get to the platforms and the tracks, but the police forced them back."

Senate approves statutory ban on flag burning

WASHINGTON -- The Senate on Thursday overwhelmingly approved a statutory ban on defacing the American flag after defeating a proposed revision that sponsors said could prove fatal in a future court test.

President George Bush said he respected the action but would continue to push for a constitutional amendment.

The 91-9 final vote came after maneuvering by Senate Republicans, who say along with Bush that amending the Constitution rather than passing a simple statute is the only effective way to counter last June's Supreme Court decision throwing out a Texas flag-burning law.

The bill, which previously passed the House but now returns there for

consideration of Senate changes, calls for up to a \$1,000 fine and a year in jail for burning or otherwise defacing the flag. Both houses are to consider a proposed amendment to the Constitution later this month.

The Democrats say they have carefully worded their bill to protect it against an expected new court challenge on free-speech grounds.

At the White House, Bush called on Congress to approve the constitutional flag-desecration amendment he supports, despite the lopsided Senate vote.

"I respect the intention of those who voted for (a statutory ban). But I continue to believe such an approach is inadequate in light of the Supreme Court decision," Bush said. "I believe that a constitutional amendment, properly drawn, is necessary, in order to provide proper protection."



Andy Menhart/Daily Nebraskan

Tall women difficult to fit

NEW YORK -- Brooke Shields, Cher and Sigourney Weaver are among the nearly 5 million American women 5 feet 8 inches or over who are considered tall. While they and other high-peaked fashion models and movie stars can afford the luxury of custom clothing, the majority of tall women face countless frustrations finding fashionable, affordable, quality clothing that fits.

Trends such as miniskirts and cropped jackets add to their wardrobe woes.

Recently in Charlotte, N.C.; St. Louis; Denver and San Jose, Calif., women of average means but above-average stature gathered to focus on the pros and cons of their extra inches. They were brought together by JCPenney, which twice yearly publishes the "Especially for Tall" catalog which offers fashions proportioned for tall women -- 5 feet 8 inches to 5 feet 11 inches -- and ultra-talls, those up to 6 feet 2 inches.

"Their height gives them a sense of power and authority," O'Connell said. "Many said they've gotten ahead in their careers because they act more assertive than their shorter counterparts and find they leave a lasting impression."

"The downside for them is the great difficulty in building a wardrobe because most specialty and department stores offer little or no apparel specifically tailored for the woman 5 feet 8 inches and above."

O'Connell says most tall women find that clothing designed for average sizes just doesn't fit. They can disguise ill-fitting shirts by rolling up the sleeves and they can buy coats, jackets and dresses in larger sizes to get the length but then have to deal with alterations.

To avoid sleeves that are too short, waistlines that are too high, shirttails too skimpy and pants that look like they've shrunk, many fashionable tall women say they shop the men's departments. There they can find sweaters, sweats, shirts, turtlenecks and pants of quality fabrics. The women also say they like to buy pants unhemmed, a standard in menswear for better fit.

JCPenney started its catalog exclusively for tall women in 1986. Tall fashions also can be mail-ordered through Sears Roebuck, Spiegel and Lane Bryant, among others, though none has a separate catalog. There isn't the plethora of offerings that there is for petites, those women 5 feet 3 and under, and much of what is offered leads toward styles that appeal to older women.

Daily
Nebraskan

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The Daily Nebraskan (USPS 144-080) is published by the UNI. Publications Board, Nebraska Union 34, 1400 R St., Lincoln, NE. Monday through Friday during the academic year; weekly during summer sessions.

Readers are encouraged to submit story ideas and comments to the Daily Nebraskan by phoning 472-1783 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The public also has access to the Publications Board. For information, contact Pam Hein, 472-2509.

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