

Witnesses fail to testify against Mandela

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa (AP) - Two key state witnesses said they feared reprisals and refused Wednesday to testify against Winnie Mandela, dealing a severe blow to the prosecution's case.

Kenneth Kgase and Tabiso Mono appeared in the Rand Supreme Court but their refusal to give evidence left the state without its main witnesses in the trial against Mandela, wife of African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela.

She and three others have been charged with four counts each of kidnapping and assault.

Prosecutor Jan Swanepoel said the state's case was based on the testimony of Kgase, Mono and Gabriel Mekgwe, three of the four young men allegedly abducted and beaten at Mandela's Soweto home in December 1988. The fourth, 14-year-old Stompie Seipei, was found dead in a field a week later.

Mekgwe disappeared Sunday. Swanepoel said he was kidnapped, and Kgase and Mono said they fear for their own lives.

The South African Press Association, meanwhile, reported that a man

claiming to be Mekgwe called the news agency Wednesday night and said he was in Harare, Zimbabwe. The caller said he did not feel safe in South Africa, SAPA said. Asked why, the man responded, "Because I know if you don't want to give evidence in South Africa, you can be detained."

The independent news agency said the man spoke to a reporter familiar with Mekgwe, and the reporter said the caller's voice was similar to the missing witness.

Kgase and Mono could receive up to two years in prison for refusing to

testify, but Kgase said he preferred that to possible physical harm.

"I really like my life, I want my life," Kgase said.

Kgase's lawyer, Paul Kennedy, said his client had been prepared to testify until the disappearance of Mekgwe. He argued that his client should not be imprisoned because the case was extraordinary, with Kgase facing possible recrimination long after its completion.

Judge M.S. Stegmann said he would rule Thursday on whether the witnesses would be imprisoned, which

could effectively halt the trial.

The case could damage relations between the ANC and the government as they prepare for negotiations on a new constitution to end white minority rule.

Mandela flew to Cape Town on Tuesday and held a lengthy meeting with President F.W. de Klerk. In a joint statement, they said they had ironed out problems in the ongoing talks between the ANC and white-led government. Mandela has given no indication the talks will be jeopardized by his wife's trial.

Gas tanker truck overturns, fire threatens suburban homes

CARMICHAEL, Calif. (AP) - A seven-alarm fire erupted early today when a gasoline tanker truck overturned, setting off 100-foot-high walls of flame and threatening "a country block" of homes and apartments.

Flames licked up from opened manhole covers in cul-de-sacs in the Sacramento suburb as burning gasoline spilled into storm drains.

"We were asleep in our apartment and heard stuff blowing up outside. We looked out and it was cars exploding in the parking lot," said Michelle Sumrall, who fled in her bathrobe and boarded an evacuation bus at dawn.

"It looked like the Fourth of July," she said.

More than 100 firefighters evacuated an area of two square miles,

including a convalescent hospital. Several homes and apartments burned, Sacramento Fire Protection District officials said.

A firefighter, the tanker truck driver and one resident suffered minor injuries, said Battalion Chief Dennis Plessas of the American River Fire Protection District.

"We saved two homes. When we rolled up, the flames were 60-80 feet out of a ditch behind the houses. The spa was starting to melt, the fence was smoking and we hit it with water," said Fire Capt. J. Daugherty.

The fire started at 3:05 a.m. when the tanker loaded with 8,400 gallons of gasoline turned over near the Sacramento River, fire officials said.



Knight-Ridder Tribune News

Two park rangers charged in murder of British tourist

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) - Two park rangers were charged with murder Wednesday in the 1988 slaying, dismemberment and burning of a young British tourist in one of Kenya's best-known game sanctuaries.

Jonah T. Magiroi, 28, and Peter M. Kipeen, 26, both Kenyans, remained mute in a five-minute court appearance on charges of murdering Julie Anne Ward, an amateur wildlife photographer, in the Masai Mara Game Reserve.

The prosecution told Chief Magistrate George Omondi-Tunya documents detailing the charges were incomplete and the two were not required to enter pleas. They were ordered held for a further court appearance Feb. 27. The two face the death penalty if convicted.

Ward's charred lower left leg and lower jaw were found in the sprawling game reserve in southwestern Kenya on Sept. 13, 1988, a week after

she was reported missing.

The rented vehicle of the 28-year-old woman was found abandoned about 10 miles from her remains.

Police initially said the woman was killed by wild animals as she set out on foot from her disabled vehicle to seek help, but were unable to explain the burning of her remains.

Ward's father, John Ward, insisted his daughter was murdered and pressed his own investigation. His efforts led to a 23-day inquest in Nairobi in 1989. The presiding magistrate held that Ward had been murdered, but failed to establish how or by whom. He ordered the case reopened.

Two Scotland Yard detectives who were invited to help in the renewed investigation recommended in March 1990 that two unidentified rangers be charged with the murder.

They said the rangers were on duty at the time Ward disappeared and were in the area not far from where her remains were discovered.

Centrum store owners to 'stick it out'

By Cindy Kimbrough
Staff Reporter

Managers of Centrum businesses said they were disappointed at Mayor Bill Harris's announcement last Thursday that redevelopment of the shopping center has been discontinued, but plan to "stick it out."

Lori Ruhl, manager of Braun's Fashions in the Centrum Plaza, 11th and O streets, said that in the back of their minds, Centrum occupants were expecting the redevelopment plans to falter.

But, she said, business managers are keeping a positive attitude and are not giving up and moving out.

"We're going to do the best we can and play it by ear," Ruhl said.

The announcement to halt the \$1.5

million renovation plans came in a letter to Steve Watson of Centrum Partners, ending a 1 1/2-year state of limbo.

Plans had included moving back the north wall to build a glass-enclosed plaza, leasing the plaza for festivals and moving the Lincoln Children's Museum from the Atrium to the Centrum.

Diane Cunningham, manager of Seiferts at the Centrum, said she didn't expect the end of redevelopment plans to affect business very much.

Business in the Centrum hadn't changed much since Dillard's closed its downtown store last spring, she said, and retail everywhere has been slower anyway.

"We were so hoping it (the reno-

vation plans) would go through, but we will stick together and stay here," she said.

Connie Mahaney, owner of From Nebraska, one of the newer businesses at the Centrum, agreed that business at the Centrum has stayed the same. From Nebraska has even grown, she said.

Business managers had been waiting for something to happen and maybe now a different plan will be developed, Mahaney said. She said she would like to see some new businesses move into the empty spaces, but now it may not happen.

"It's a shame it is so empty," she said.

But she said she would "stick it out" like everyone else.

Discovery

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have lived in marine water. Harwood said that suggests large seas once existed in areas that now are covered with about two miles of ice.

On another trip, Harwood found pieces of wood that were dated at three million years. That discovery, he said, did not convince skeptics that Antarctica was once warmer because it could not be proved that the wood wasn't brought there from another climate.

The recently discovered leaves have silenced many skeptics, he said, because they could not have been trans-

ported. Instead, the leaves were preserved where they fell.

Harwood said graduate student Richard Graham, who was with Harwood in Antarctica, will work to date the leaves more accurately with a method that measures how long rocks have been exposed to solar radiation.

The current dating of the leaf-bearing rocks is based on marine fossils found among the leaves. But that age determination will be challenged by skeptics, and Harwood and Graham are preparing for those challenges by providing better evidence of the leaves' age.

Harwood said the discovery of the leaves will benefit other areas of science.

He said he is shipping 150 pounds of the rocks bearing the leaves to a colleague in Tasmania, who will study the fossils to learn about plant evolution. Comparisons will be made between the fossil leaves and existing plant life on other continents.

Other researchers are waiting for the fossils to examine them for insects and other organisms, Harwood said. They will look for the last survivors of an arctic cooling that led to formation of a permanent Antarctic ice cap about three million years ago.

Harwood has been at UNL for a year and was previously at Ohio State University. He still is working in conjunction with scientists at Ohio State's Byrd Polar Research Center.

War

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said allied warplanes last Saturday attacked their bus as it left Kuwait, killing 30 of their countrymen.

At U.N. headquarters in New York, where Third World diplomats sought an open Security Council discussion on the conflict, an African delegate, Bagbeni Nzengeya of Zaire, said the civilian deaths "will make everyone think again about the scope of the war."

Iraq's foreign minister, Tariq Aziz, will fly to Moscow this weekend to meet with Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, a Soviet spokesman said.

A Soviet envoy's talks Tuesday with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein in Baghdad "give cause for hope," the spokesman said without elaboration.

The deadly Baghdad air strike was among 2,800 sorties mounted by Operation Desert Storm on Wednesday in favorably clear skies.

About one-third of the missions were directed at targets in southern Iraq and Iraqi-occupied Kuwait, aimed at "softening up" the dug-in positions of Iraqi troops before the expected ground offensive by the U.S.-led alliance.

Saudi officers reported that one of their attack planes, an F-5, was lost on a bombing mission against ground forces in Iraq, and the pilot was listed as missing.

NEWS BRIEFS

AIDS group meets

The AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power-Nebraska will meet for the first time Saturday.

ACT-UP Nebraska will be a direct-action organization dedicated to challenging homophobia, discrimination and governmental and private sector responses to AIDS. Its activities may include boycotting homophobic activities and products, picketing, demonstrating and writing letters.

People of all sexual orientations who support the cause are encouraged to attend.

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