

Rival skater's bodyguard confesses to role in attack

PORTLAND, Ore.—A bodyguard for figure skating champion Tonya Harding has admitted being involved in the attack that knocked Harding's main rival, Nancy Kerrigan, out of the national championships, according to published reports.

Shawn Eric Eckardt confessed to being involved in the Jan. 6 attack at the U.S. Figure Skating Championships in Detroit, according to NBC's "Now" program and The Oregonian newspaper. Both cited anonymous sources. A man struck Kerrigan with a club after a practice session, severely bruising her right leg and forcing her to withdraw from the competition. The attacker escaped.

Earlier, Eckardt had called allegations he was involved in the attack "absurd."

NBC and today's Oregonian also quoted unidentified sources as saying the club had been found in a trash bin behind the arena where Kerrigan was attacked.

Deputy Detroit Police Chief Benny Napoleon said at a news conference no arrests had been made, but that the investigation was "progressing satisfactorily." He would not comment on whether anyone had confessed.

"People have been interviewed by the FBI. The contents of those interviews will not be shared at this point," he said. Harding won the U.S. championship at the trials. She has denied any link to the attack, saying she felt cheated of the chance to compete with Kerrigan. The International Committee of the U.S. Figure Skating Association named Kerrigan to the U.S. Winter Olympics team even though she didn't compete at the championships. Harding was the other skater named to the team, which will compete in Lillehammer, Norway, from Feb. 12-27.

Kerrigan's brother, Michael, delivered a brief statement for the family outside their home in Stoneham, Mass., just outside Boston.

"We are sure the law enforcement authorities are working very hard on this case and we hope their efforts are successful," he said.

Harding was scheduled to fly to Fairfax, Va., Wednesday for the

NationsBank U.S. Olympic Festival on Ice. But she canceled, said Barry Geissler, general manager of the Patriot Center, the site of the event.

A representative of Bill Graham Presents, the event's promoter, said Harding told producers she was "having a few media problems."

No one answered the telephone at Harding's house, and her coach, Diane Rawlinson, did not reply to a message left on her answering machine. A call to the U.S. Figure Skating office was not returned.

The Oregonian reported Wednesday that the FBI was investigating Eckardt and Harding's husband, Jeff Gillooly.

A Portland minister went to the FBI after hearing a tape recording in which the two men allegedly spoke with a "hit man" from Arizona about attacking Kerrigan, said private investigator Gary Crowe. Crowe said Harding evidently knew nothing about any plot to attack Kerrigan.

Crowe said the minister, Eugene C. Saunders, came to him for advice after an acquaintance played the tape recording for him.

Crowe said Saunders told him the tape recording made it clear that Kerrigan was the target.

Saunders told him a man's voice on the tape asked, "Why don't we just kill her?"

The response was: "We don't need to kill her. Let's just hit her in the knee."

He said Saunders identified the voices on the tape as those of Gillooly, Eckardt and an Arizona man.

Saunders was friends with Eckardt, Crowe said, but he didn't know whether it was Eckardt who had provided the tape.

No one was home at Saunders' house Wednesday. He did not return phone messages left on his answering machine.

Gillooly told The Oregonian that he had been questioned by the FBI, but denied that he was involved in the attack.

"I wouldn't do that," Gillooly said. "I have more faith in my wife than to bump off her competition."

Clinton seeks special counsel for Whitewater investigation

WASHINGTON (AP) - President Clinton today will ask for appointment of a special counsel to investigate his investment in a controversial Arkansas real estate development, a senior White House official said.

The White House will announce the decision later today, said the official, speaking to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

The reversal of the White House policy came as Senate Republican Leader Bob Dole called for appointment of a special Senate committee to investigate the Clintons' 1980s investment in the Whitewater Development Corp. The White House had no immediate action to Dole's demand.

"Regardless of what the attorney general does, Sen. Dole feels Congress ought to be involved on a bipartisan basis, just as it has been in con-

troversies in the past," said Dole spokesman Clark Hinc.

The White House for weeks has opposed Republican demands for an independent investigation of the Whitewater investment, arguing that an ongoing Justice Department investigation was adequate.

Echoing the White House, Reno has said she did not believe it was necessary for her to appoint a special counsel, and has said that if she did Republicans would then question the investigator's objectivity.

But Republicans have been relentless in their criticism of White House handling of the controversy, and the calls by a growing number of Democrats for Clinton to call for an independent review stripped the administration of its argument that Republicans were trying to embarrass Clinton.

Lorena Bobbitt testifies in trial

MANASSAS, Va. (AP) - Lorena Bobbitt took the stand today in her trial for cutting off her husband's penis, testifying about her Catholic upbringing and her early romance with John Bobbitt.

She described how they met at an enlisted men's club on the Quantico Marine Corps Base where Bobbitt was stationed, how they dated for 10 months and how he proposed to her when she was 19 in front of her mother.

"I was in love with him. To me he represented everything," she said. As for him, she felt "he was in love with me."

Mrs. Bobbitt said she was brought up with strict Catholic views against premarital sex, abortion and divorce. "My family wouldn't allow it," she said.

Of divorce, she said, "It's a humiliation, it is a shame."

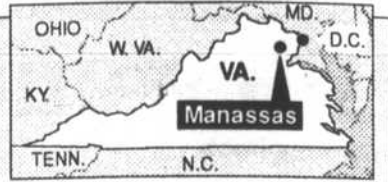
She said her family resolved conflict without any screaming and that she expected to solve her marital problems the same way.

Mrs. Bobbitt claims she cut off her husband's penis with a kitchen knife only after he sexually assaulted her.

Bobbitt, 26, was acquitted last year of that charge. He testified Monday on the first day of her trial that he was too exhausted to have sex when he returned early that morning from a night out.

Mrs. Bobbitt, 24, is charged with malicious wounding. If convicted, the Ecuadorian-born manicurist could get up to 20 years in prison and be deported.

A chronology of the Bobbitt case



- June 18, 1989: John W. Bobbitt marries Lorena L. Gallo.
• June 1991: Couple's first separation, lasted two weeks.
• October 1991: Bobbitt returns to his family's home in upstate New York.
• September 1992: Couple reconciles in Manassas.
• May 1993: Couple discusses divorce.
• June 18, 1993: Mrs. Bobbitt alleges her husband raped her.
• June 22: Mrs. Bobbitt tells a neighbor her husband is abusing her. Bobbitt and a house guest go out for a night of drinking.
• June 23: Bobbitt returns home in the early morning hours. He claims he went to bed and did not attack his wife. She claims he was drunk and abusive, pinning her to the bed and raping her.
• June 23: Mrs. Bobbitt severs Bobbitt's penis with a red-handled kitchen knife, flees the apartment and tosses the organ from her car window.
• June 23: Bobbitt goes to Prince William Hospital, where doctors reattach the organ in a nine-hour operation.
• June 23: Mrs. Bobbitt charged with malicious wounding.
• July 1993: Bobbitts file for divorce.
• August 1993: Bobbitt charged with marital sexual assault.
• Nov. 8: Bobbitt's trial begins.
• Nov. 9: Mrs. Bobbitt testifies that husband raped her; Bobbitt denies it.
• Nov. 10: Bobbitt acquitted by jury of nine women, three men.
• Jan. 10, 1994: Start of Mrs. Bobbitt's trial.

Clinton optimistic after NATO meeting

BRUSSELS, Belgium — President Clinton conceded Wednesday that a plan to dismantle Ukraine's nuclear force could face a tough fight in the former Soviet republic's parliament, but he predicted its approval.



He likened Ukrainian President Leonid M. Kravchuk's fight for the new pact — announced on Monday — to his own battle for U.S. congressional approval of a contentious free-trade pact with Mexico and Canada.

Clinton spoke at a wrap-up news conference after a two-day NATO summit.

Clinton met afterward with European Union leaders and urged the 12-nation trading bloc to match NATO overtures to former Warsaw Pact countries by keeping markets open for goods from Eastern and Central Europe.

"We must continue our efforts to expand global growth and world markets," he said.

Later, Clinton flew to Prague, capital of the Czech Republic, to do a

66 We must continue our efforts to expand global growth and world markets.

—Clinton

sales job of his own — persuading former Soviet-bloc nations to embrace his "Partnership for Peace" plan.

"They will clearly understand that this is a very serious proposal" that will expand NATO rather than limit it, Clinton said. President Vaclav Havel showed Clinton around Prague Castle and spoke favorably of the NATO-backed partnership.

The Czech Republic is "ready to implement it immediately in concrete terms," Havel said. Asked about full NATO membership for his and other former Soviet-bloc countries, he said the plan "provides an open door for all of us," but he did not speculate on a timetable.

Clinton, offering reassurances to nervous neighbors of Russia as he stood at Havel's side, said the security of Eastern European nations is "important to the security of the United States, to Europe and the Atlantic Alliance."

Havel, asked if he was nervous about the rise of ultranationalists and

communists in Russia, replied: "The development in the Russian Federation is very dramatic, extremely complex, very painful."

And yet, he said, "we believe that, step by step, even in the Russian Federation, we will see democratization and market economy."

The plan offers the new democracies in Central and Eastern Europe limited association with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

"Ultimately the partnership will lead to an expansion of NATO," Clinton said.

Lithuania quickly expressed its intent to enter the partnership, with President Algirdas Brazauskas instructing his government to start "immediate preparation" to sign the document with the Western alliance. Lithuania's interest in the initiative has drawn a sharp response from Moscow, which is opposed to the NATO alliance expanding to its borders.

State Additional charges filed in triple murder

FALLS CITY — Two men accused of murdering three people, including a woman who posed as a man, were charged Wednesday with breaking into the farmhouse where the bodies were found.

Marvin Nissen, 21, and John Lotter, 22, who already face three counts of first-degree murder apiece, were charged with additional counts of burglary, being felons in possession of firearms and being habitual criminals on the charges stemming from the execution-style shootings at a rural Humboldt farmhouse on New Year's Eve.

Lotter also was charged with three additional counts of using a dangerous weapon to commit a felony.

Richardson County Attorney Douglas Merz did not return a phone message Wednesday seeking comment.

The burglary counts stem from a break-in at the house where the three were killed, and the new weapons charges relate to the Dec. 31 deaths.

Nissen and Lotter are accused of shooting to death Teena Brandon, 21, of Lincoln, Lisa Lambert, 23, of Humboldt and Philip DeVine, 22, of Fairfield, Iowa.

Lotter also is charged with kidnapping and first-degree sexual assault in an alleged Christmas Day rape of Brandon. Nissen is charged with kidnapping and aiding and abetting first-degree sexual assault.

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