

'Terrible event' prompts radio show host to resign

■ **Art Bell**, whose 'Coast to Coast' is syndicated nationally, said Tuesday's broadcast would be his last.

PAHRUMP, Nev. (AP) - Radio talk host Art Bell, whose popular overnight show is an outlet for conspiracy theories and claims of the supernatural, announced Tuesday he was quitting, claiming his family was under a mysterious threat.

"What you are listening to is my final broadcast," Bell told the vast listening audience of his show, "Coast to Coast," before signing off at about 3 a.m.

He said "a threatening, terrible event occurred to my family, which I could not tell you about. Because of that event, and a succession of other

events, what you're listening to right now is my final broadcast."

Bell, 51, did his broadcasts from his Pahrump, Nev., home. His telephone was disconnected Tuesday, and he couldn't be reached.

Covington, Ky.-based radio giant Jacor Communications Inc., which distributes Bell's show, referred telephone inquiries to its Los Angeles syndication arm, Premiere Radio Network.

"We will be playing 'best-of' shows until further notice until we find out what's going on," Premiere spokeswoman Mir Hendrickson said.

Jacor also distributes shows by such popular personalities as Rush Limbaugh and Dr. Laura Schlessinger. Last week, Cincinnati-based Clear Channel Communications announced it was taking over Jacor in a \$3.4 billion

stock deal.

Bell's program was said to attract some 15 million viewers on more than 400 stations nationwide, making it the country's most listened-to overnight radio show. Typical topics would be people who claimed to be kidnapped by space aliens, had a theory on cattle mutilations or thought the CIA was following them.

"I'll talk about anything," Bell said recently. "I allow those phones to ring, and I go straight to it. As a result, I get some very, very strange phone calls."

In November 1996, an amateur astronomer told Bell he had a photo showing a mysterious "Saturn-like object" trailing the Hale-Bopp comet. Astronomers later said the object was actually a star whose image was distorted by the

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ART BELL
"Coast to Coast" host

astronomer's telescope.

Rumors continued for weeks, fostered by debate on the Internet and continued publicity on Bell's program.

In March 1997, 39 people in the so-called "Heaven's Gate" cult committed suicide in a Southern California mansion about the time

the comet was closest to Earth. They left a message saying that with the comet comes "the spacecraft from the Level Above Human to take us home."

Bell said he was saddened by the suicides, but never heard of the cult and carried no responsibility for them.

A&E Briefs

Law firm sues Flockhart of Fox's 'Ally McBeal'

NEW YORK (AP) - Real-life lawyers are taking Calista Flockhart to court.

The law firm of Frankfurt, Garbus, Klein and Seltz is suing the star of "Ally McBeal," saying they deserve 5 percent of everything she earns on the hit show, because they reviewed and negotiated the contracts that sealed her deal with Fox.

Flockhart, who plays a flighty young lawyer, agreed to 5 percent, the firm said. As of last week, according to the firm, she earned at least \$780,000 and owed the attorneys at least \$39,000.

"We've tried and tried and tried to resolve this amicably," said Maura Wogan, who filed the lawsuit Friday. "We've been paid absolutely no money."

Flockhart's Los Angeles lawyer, Barry Tyerman, said: "I know nothing about this suit. It's news to me. I know that Frankfurt, Garbus had made some claims, but I thought they had been dropped."

Charlton Heston says he has no regrets about baring rear

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. (AP) - There's a certain coffee girl Charlton Heston hasn't forgotten from the

1960s.

The 74-year-old actor was asked Monday at a book-signing whether he regretted baring his rear end in 1968's "Planet of the Apes."

"No," he said. "Actors have the modesty of mice. In summer stock, you're always changing your clothes in the wings. Of course, what you do when you're naked is another thing."

Heston found the experience fun. "While my back was turned," he recalled, "I heard one of the coffee girls behind me say, 'Oh, nice buns!'"

Garth Brooks makes surprise visit at mall

BLOOMINGTON, Minn. (AP) - Attention shoppers, Garth Brooks is in the rotunda!

The country star surprised Trisha Yearwood at the Mall of America on Monday by stepping out of a crowd as she signed autographs and breaking into song. The pair did two duets before 5,000 screaming fans.

Yearwood has been opening for Brooks, and the two were in town for sold-out shows at the Target Center in nearby Minneapolis.

Golfer's wife reportedly sues for millions in divorce

LONDON (AP) - Golfer Nick

Faldo's 12-year marriage to his second wife ended in divorce Tuesday.

A money and property settlement has yet to be decided. Gill Faldo, the mother of Faldo's three children, reportedly wants millions.

Neither was in court Tuesday.

The marriage isn't the only recent breakup for Faldo, 41, a three-time Masters and British Open champion. He disclosed this month that he and American girlfriend Brenna Cepelak were ending their three-year relationship.

Raiders' coach awaits tests on drunken driving charge

PLEASANTON, Calif. (AP) - Oakland Raiders Coach Jon Gruden was arrested for investigation of drunken driving after his team beat San Diego.

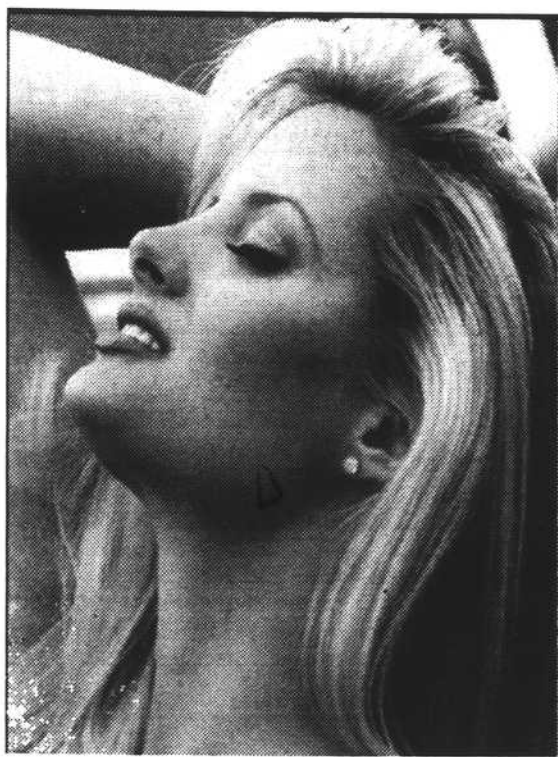
Gruden, 35, the NFL's youngest coach, was jailed Sunday and released three hours later. He is to appear in court Nov. 9.

Gruden was straddling lanes and exceeding the 35 mph speed limit by 15 to 20 mph, the California Highway Patrol said. He took a blood test, which authorities said takes 10 days to two weeks to process.

Reached at his home Monday, Gruden said he wants to wait "to see if justice prevails."

"I'm confident it will," he added.

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