

Oprah says her show 'not the evening news'

AMARILLO, Texas (AP) — Oprah Winfrey testified yesterday that she's the host of a talk show — "not the evening news" — and viewers know the difference.

Even so, Winfrey told the jury in the beef-defamation case brought against her by Texas cattlemen, she tried to balance her show on mad cow disease by getting comment from people on both sides of the issue.

"If I wanted to do an anti-beef show, as I'm being accused of, I didn't have to put" pro-beef guests on, Winfrey said.

The talk show host, her production company and vegetarian activist Howard Lyman are being sued for more than \$10.3 million over an April 1996 show that suggested U.S. cattle could spread mad cow disease to people in the United States and make AIDS look like the common cold.

Winfrey testified that she tried to



WINFREY

provide balance by putting on Agriculture Department scientist William Hueston and Gary Weber of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association to represent the view that U.S. beef is safe.

"I was there to offer both sides' opinions," she said. "That's why I had Dr. Weber there. If I didn't want to have him there, there is no law that said he had to be there."

Winfrey said repeatedly that viewers understand guests on her show are expressing their opinions. "This is not a news magazine. It's not the evening news," she said. She

added: "I'm not going to sit here and say because we put both sides on the show that every show ends in a tie."

Mad cow disease has ravaged cattle herds in Britain for a decade. It is blamed for about 20 human deaths overseas but has never been detected in the United States.

The cattlemen contend the program was edited to take out pro-beef comments in favor of ratings-grabbing and alarming statements by Lyman. They say the show caused already slumping cattle prices to fall to 10-year lows.

They are suing under a Texas law that protects agricultural products from false and defamatory remarks. The trial is in its third week.

Winfrey added that she believes any comments by Hueston or Weber that were edited out were redundant.

She also disputed testimony that she told the producer in charge of editing the show, James Kelley, to "cut that boring beef guy out," in reference to Weber. Winfrey also said she never spoke to Kelley about what comments should be left in or taken out. ■

BRIEFLY

Year 2000 glitch has feds on attack

WASHINGTON — Promising "a major technological and managerial effort," President Clinton created a White House council yesterday to coordinate efforts to head off computer problems that threaten critical federal services when the calendar year changes to 2000.

The problem will occur because many computer systems and other electronic devices, in both government and private industry, are programmed to recognize only the last two digits in a date and will misinterpret 2000 as 1900.

Zamora's friend testifies

FORT WORTH, Texas — Former Naval Academy cadet Diane Zamora said her 16-year-old romantic rival was a "tramp" who "deserved to die," an ex-roommate testified at Zamora's murder trial yesterday.

Jennifer McKearney offered details from a late-night dorm-room conversation she said she had with Zamora in August 1996, eight months after Adrienne Jones was killed. Zamora, 20, and her former fiancé, former Air Force Academy cadet David Graham, are accused of murdering Jones because of her one-time fling with Graham. Prosecutors allege Zamora hit Jones over the head with a dumbbell weight, then ordered Graham to finish her off by shooting her.

McKearney, also a former midshipman, said Zamora acknowledged she was present during the slaying but never mentioned striking Jones in the head with a dumbbell. McKearney said her roommate showed no remorse in a later conversation.

Avoid bomb-case witness

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — The FBI warned people to stay away from a man wanted for questioning in last week's fatal bombing of an abortion clinic.

While Eric Robert Rudolph, 31, is being called a "material witness" — not a suspect — in the blast at the New Woman All Women clinic, no one but law enforcement officers should approach him, said FBI spokesman Craig Dahle. The FBI, in a warning issued late Tuesday about Rudolph, cited the "violence associated with this crime." A warrant is out for Rudolph's arrest.

After the bombing, witnesses reported seeing a 1989 gray Nissan pickup truck with a North Carolina license plate registered to Rudolph. — ASSOCIATED PRESS



RUDOLPH

Blizzard stuns motorists, experts

FROM PAGE 1A

Overton, Pickett and Fentress counties were hardest hit by falling trees and power outages. Overton emergency medical workers fought their way through blocked streets to take about a dozen patients to Livingston Hospital.

"The oxygen patients, their electricity is out, and they can't get their O₂," Liz Crabtree said. "A lot of them just don't have any fuel. They're cold."

At its worst, an estimated 5,000 electric customers in Warren, DeKalb, White and Van Buren counties were without power during the winter storm. Still, few resorted to shelters, preferring to stay with friends and relatives, officials there said.

Back in Putnam County, emergency workers and volunteers like Ralph Dearth of Monterey began patrolling the interstate to help the stranded. Dearth drove circuits in his four-wheel-drive vehicle, picking up motorists, and taking them to Monterey Community Church.

"I think God sent him to me," said truck driver Jaime Navarro of Laredo, Texas, stranded for 14 hours after a filter on his truck apparently froze at about 7 p.m. Tuesday.

About 125 travelers spent the night at the century-old First Baptist Church in Monterey, Pastor Bill Vance said. Most slept in rows on the padded pews of the sanctuary.

Others like Hendrickson didn't arrive at the church until yesterday, as National Guard trucks and Red Cross volunteers moved in. They took the sick, the elderly and families with young children to hospitals or about 15 area shelters.

Soldiers went from car to car to pass out gasoline, dozens of sandwiches and gallons of hot coffee

while their heavy equipment dragged jackknifed tractor-trailer trucks to the side of the road.

"Mostly what folks were needing in the middle of the day was to see something happening," Capt. Jack Duncan said. "Even if we couldn't stop to minister to each one, they could see we were there."

Although eastbound lanes of the interstate remained open, wary travelers clogged the Highland Rim Market near Burgess Falls.

Truckers Mike and Denise Merrey of Egon, S.D., looked through the market's glass doors as vehicles inched through the falling snow. The Merreys' load of processed chicken was due in New York at midnight; they pulled off the interstate at 3 a.m. as visibility shut down.

"No load's worth getting yourself killed over," Mike Merrey said.

By 4 p.m. yesterday, workers had carved a path through the snow and cars on the westbound side of the interstate.

"We are advising people not to use it, but we can't keep people off of it," said Cecil Whaley, of the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency.

The storm was expected to wrap back around Tennessee last night, bringing 2 more inches of snow in the Cookeville area and an inch in Nashville.

Today, "things are finally going to start pulling out of here," Richardson said.

At least one person got through by taking back roads. State Sen. Tommy Burks, D-Monterey, missed some of his morning committee meetings at Legislative Plaza, but he was able to make it to the Capitol in time for an afternoon Senate session. ■

Staff writer Bill Carey and state correspondent Bill Zechman contributed to this report.



Sheriff's deputies in Lodi, Calif., rescue a family from a flooded mobile home park.

Wind, rain, snow slam U.S. coasts

Associated Press

Thousands were left without light and heat yesterday as a storm crawled along the East Coast and Appalachians, producing wind, rain and more than a foot of snow.

The storm, the same one that raked tornadoes across Florida earlier in the week and dumped snow yesterday in Tennessee, battered beaches yesterday with waves driven by wind up to 58 mph and flooded low-lying areas with heavy rain.

At least four traffic-related deaths in Kentucky were blamed on the storm, as were three deaths in Georgia and one in Ohio. In

South Carolina, a pregnant woman drowned when her car plunged into a swollen creek. One person was killed Monday in Florida.

In the West, California streams receded after being driven out of their banks by torrential rainfall Tuesday.

However, more rain was expected during the night, with heavy snow likely in the mountains, and another storm was forecast late today into tomorrow.

California's forecast was easy, said National Weather Service meteorologist Diana Henderson. "Rain. Lots and lots of rain."

One man was killed by a falling tree in California and a second

was missing in a swollen creek and presumed drowned.

Monterey, Va., had snowdrifts 3 to 4 feet high. Kentucky's Lincoln County was buried under 15 to 18 inches of snow with drifts standing as high as 5 feet, said county Judge-Executive Jim Reed.

About 85,000 Florida customers were still minus electricity yesterday after storms Monday brought tornadoes and rain.

Gov. Lawton Chiles declared a statewide emergency as more bad weather was predicted for the weekend. A weather system moving in from the Gulf was expected to produce more severe thunderstorms and possible tornadoes. ■

WASHINGTON

Satcher nomination heats up

■ Surgeon general's post goes empty while sides battle over candidate

By PENNY BENDER

Tennessee Washington Bureau and DEBORAH MATHIS

Gannett News Service

WASHINGTON — The Senate wrestled yesterday with the nomination of Dr. David Satcher to be surgeon general, as conservative lawmakers painted him as unethical and defenders worked to muster the votes to confirm him.

Despite vigorous and colorful objections to the nomination, however, there appeared to be enough Republican support for Satcher to win confirmation. A vote could come as early as today, barring a threatened filibuster.

Satcher, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta and former president of Meharry Medical College in Nashville, is President Clinton's second nominee to be the nation's top doctor — a post that has been vacant

since Joycelyn Elders resigned under pressure in 1994.

He follows the contentious nomination of Henry Foster, a Nashville obstetrician who teaches at Meharry.

Satcher, who now lives in Atlanta, has been criticized by social conservatives on several issues, from his stand on abortion to research the CDC participated in in the Third World, where placebos

were given to some pregnant women infected with HIV. Supporters, both Republican and Democratic, said the criticisms are grossly exaggerated and, in some cases, untrue.

"I am sorely disappointed in the substance of those allegations that have come across my fax machine," said Sen. Bill Frist, R-Tenn., a heart transplant surgeon who supports Satcher.

Frist also supported Foster's nomination in 1995, which fell short of

Senate approval after it was reported that Foster had performed abortions.

"Dr. David Satcher is the man for this position," Frist said. "He is a scientist. He is a family man. He is an educator. He is an eloquent spokesperson. He is dedicated to improving the public health. I think at the end of the day we will get to the truth."

The leading critic in the Senate, Sen. John Ashcroft, R-Mo., said Satcher has "embraced partial-birth abortion, endorses needle exchange programs and tolerates abortions for minor children without their parents' consent."

He also criticized the CDC's involvement in an HIV study conducted in Africa and Asia, in which some patients were given placebos instead of the AIDS drug AZT.

"I think the people of Africa need to be treated with the same kind of dignity as the people in America are treated," said Ashcroft, who has joined the Christian Coalition and the Family Research Council's campaign against Satcher. "It is not OK to do things that are not ethical ...

because people are poorer than you are."

Both the socially conservative groups have called on President Clinton to drop Satcher. They mounted a similar campaign in 1995 to scuttle the nomination of Dr. Henry Foster, a Nashville obstetrician and, like Satcher, a Meharry Medical professor.

The nation's most prominent medical and science organizations, including the American Medical Association, have endorsed Satcher's nomination, calling upon the Senate to approve him. The nomination passed the committee hurdle to confirmation in October.

Sen. Jim Jeffords, R-Vt., chairman of the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee, urged his colleagues to approve Satcher and soon.

"Dr. Satcher has ... pledged to me that he will rely upon science and common sense rather than politics to guide his decision-making."

But Ashcroft is threatening a filibuster unless the CDC provides internal documents on the HIV study. ■

Legal watchers expect Trie to give names

The Boston Globe

WASHINGTON — Yah Lin (Charlie) Trie, who is to be arraigned today on charges of illegal fund-raising for the Democratic Party, is expected to cooperate with prosecutors and possibly pave the way for indictments of people close to President Clinton's inner circle, legal specialists said yesterday.

Trie's voluntary return to the United States from Asia raised alarm bells across Washington that the one-time Little Rock restaurateur would break his silence about who asked him to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars in questionable contributions for Clinton's 1996 reelection campaign.

Justice Department officials declined yesterday to say whether

Trie has an agreement to receive leniency in exchange for implicating officials, but that is what many observers believe has occurred.

"It certainly appears that he does" have a deal, said Senator John McCain, R-Ariz.

"There is every possibility that Mr. Trie could reveal some very important information. He had very close connections with the fund-raising, and he was in the White House a great deal."

Victoria Toensing, a former top

federal prosecutor, said yesterday that it would be "very rare" for the Justice Department to allow a fugitive such as Trie to return to the United States and then be freed on bond unless that person has agreed to cooperate.

"From my viewpoint, I have never heard of a person who has fled coming back and being given personal bond," said Toensing, the second-ranking Criminal Division official during the Reagan administration.

"He could very well be the key to unlocking the higher-ups that know about the fund-raising activities," Toensing said.

Trie was charged last Wednesday

in a 15-count indictment that accuses him of fraudulently buying access to the President. The indictment says Trie illegally raised money from foreign sources and used those contributions to get business associates into meetings with Clinton and Vice President Al Gore. The indictment also says Trie instructed an associate to destroy evidence in the case.

Trie is particularly important because, unlike many other characters in the campaign finance saga, he knew the President for many years and Clinton used to frequent Trie's restaurant when he was governor of Arkansas. He worked in concert with former Democratic Party finance vice-chairman John Huang. ■



TRIE



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