

Tech uses experimental drug on hantavirus victim from Merkel

LUBBOCK (AP) — Medical researchers at Texas Tech say nitric oxide was used to provide dramatic relief of hantavirus symptoms of a 16-year-old boy from Merkel, but they cautioned that the success of the experimental drug may have been luck.

Dr. Robert B. Rosenberg and other assistant professors from the Texas Tech Health Sciences Center pediatrics department described the treatment on Monday during a live satellite broadcast beamed to 750 sites in 36 states, including hospitals, health department and Veterans Administration facilities.

Heath Henderson of Merkel was suffering from vomiting, fever, intense headache and acute respiratory distress syndrome when he was admitted to University Medical Center in September.

Henderson had contracted hantavirus pulmonary syndrome, a rodent-borne disease which frequently kills its vic-

tims by cutting off oxygen transference from the lungs to the blood.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved nitric oxide for limited use in treating severe breathing problems in pediatric and adult patients.

Rosenberg was on the team of pediatric critical care specialists that treated Henderson, and he is the doctor who developed UMC's protocol for nitric oxide use.

"This is not a treatment for hantavirus," Rosenberg emphasized.

"It's an experimental treatment for high blood pressure in the lungs."

Henderson was the first patient in Rosenberg's ongoing 2-year nitric oxide study, one of several nitric oxide studies nationwide.

It's likely that Henderson was the first patient in the nation to receive nitric oxide as a therapy for symptoms caused by hantavirus, said Dr. Joel

Kupersmith, dean of the Texas Tech School of Medicine.

"Our review of previous research did not turn up any other example where nitric oxide has been used to treat hantavirus symptoms," Kupersmith said.

Rosenberg and his team have since treated a second patient with nitric oxide, a newborn with serious breathing problems.

Like Henderson, the baby recovered.

But the results in Henderson's case were dramatic, said Dr. Michael J. Romano, another physician on the team who treated the boy.

Within an hour of breathing the nitric oxide through a ventilator, Henderson's condition improved, he said.

"(Nitric oxide) treats pulmonary hypertension ... when the lungs' blood vessels spasm and contract and blood can't get to the lungs to be oxygenated," Romano said. "So this is a possible

therapy for pulmonary hypertension, which can be caused by a whole lot of things."

Nitric oxide is a naturally occurring enzyme in the human body that helps regulate blood pressure, Rosenberg said.

And though the two Lubbock cases had positive outcomes, other nitric oxide studies nationwide reflect mixed results, he said.

"The most recent information is not very encouraging," Rosenberg said. "So we're still looking at years before we know if it's going to be helpful for older children and adults."

Data compiled over several years suggest that newborns are more likely to benefit from nitric oxide therapy than older children and adults, he said.

Henderson was Texas' fourth documented case of hantavirus reported in 1997, and the 11th case in Texas since the state began keeping records of the

virus in 1993.

There have been five recorded deaths in Texas related to hantavirus since 1993, according to the Texas Department of Health. Nationwide, 174 confirmed cases of hantavirus pulmonary syndrome have been reported to the Centers for Disease Control.

Experts believe that hantavirus is transmitted to humans through contact with rodents and their droppings. Infection results in flu-like symptoms such as fever, muscle aches and sometimes shortness of breath. Even with aggressive treatment, the virus can kill, essentially cutting off oxygen transference from the lungs to the blood.

And though no confirmed cases of human-to-human transmission have occurred in the United States, three possible human-to-human hantavirus infection cases may have occurred in South America.

Jury selected in ex-mayor's murder trial

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — The second capital murder trial of former Ingleside mayor Mark Crawford was moved to San Antonio because of the attention the media gave the case in the Coastal Bend.

During jury selection Monday, the defense wondered if the trial had moved far enough. One-third of the prospective jurors reported having knowledge of the case.

It took 10 hours to select 12 jurors — seven women and five men — and two alternates from the pool of 75 provided by Bexar County.

Opening arguments were scheduled to begin at 9 a.m. today.

Crawford is accused of kidnapping business partner Nick Brueggen, 49, of Houston, forcing him into a large metal tool box and gassing him to death with exhaust fumes from a sport utility vehicle. Brueggen's body was found about a month after the May 1996 slaying, buried behind a building leased by Crawford near Aransas Pass.

Crawford's first trial last summer in Rockport was declared a mistrial after a jury deadlocked 10-2 in favor of conviction. That trial lasted about three weeks.

The trial was moved to San Antonio from Aransas County because of Crawford's attorney, Bill May, argued successfully that news media attention in the Coastal Bend made a fair trial there unlikely.

However, San Antonio proved to be not far enough away to escape public attention.

Many of Monday's prospective jurors said they had heard about the case and made up their minds.

"I'm ready to vote guilty right now," one potential juror said.

"My mind is made up," another said.

Crawford, 43, smiled.

Crawford appeared tired but attentive during the jury selection process.

He has been held in a solitary cell at the Bexar County Adult

Detention Center since Friday under the facility's tightest security for high-profile inmates.

Crawford had been in the Aransas County Jail for the past 18 months, since his arrest and extradition from Mississippi in July of last year, six weeks after Brueggen's body was discovered.

Former co-defendant and confessed accomplice Kirk Johnson led police to the body. Before that, police were unaware of Brueggen's death.

Johnson, along with accomplice Michael Beckcom, were the state's star witnesses in the first trial. Both men testified in exchange for lighter sentences.

Johnson is from Nederland and Beckcom from Houston.

Kirk Johnson was expected to testify first today.

The issue of plea bargains and the credibility of witnesses who enter into them was critical in the first trial. Two jurors voted innocent because they couldn't believe Johnson and Beckcom, jurors said.

Plea bargains again were an issue Monday.

"I wouldn't believe a word they were saying," one potential juror said.

"I don't think it's fair," another potential juror said about the practice of plea bargaining.

May suggested to the jury pool that the testimony of Johnson

and Beckcom was bought with their freedom.

Johnson received probation in exchange for testifying, and Beckcom agreed to serve at least 14 years in a federal prison for his testimony.

Capital murder is punishable by death or life in prison, but prosecutor Anita O'Rourke is not seeking the death penalty.

Crawford also faces a federal indictment involving a California company, which was the focus of an investigation at the time of Brueggen's death.

Federal authorities accuse Crawford of killing Brueggen to prevent him from testifying in that case.

Several witnesses in the last trial testified that Crawford was angry at Brueggen for turning on him.

The indictment accused the pair of conspiracy, money laundering, wire fraud and a variety of other federal crimes.

May said he has subpoenaed 50 witnesses, including Crawford's mother and Frank Bochicchio, the man May alleges masterminded the plot to kill Brueggen, then framed Crawford.

Bochicchio, a Corpus Christi businessman living on Padre Island, suffers from cancer. He was arrested in connection with the killing, but a grand jury declined to indict him.

May suggested to the jury pool that the testimony of Johnson

Anderson County constable accused of having sex with four teen-age girls

ATHENS (AP) — An Anderson County constable who last month was elected to a third term has surrendered on an arrest warrant alleging he sexually assaulted a teen-age girl at a Dallas motel in May of last year.

Andre L. Ingram Sr., 35, turned himself in early Monday to a Henderson County constable, Daryl Graham, and was booked into the Henderson County Jail. He was released about 3:30 p.m. after posting a \$25,000 bond.

The alleged Dallas victim is the fourth teen-age girl Ingram is accused of being illegally involved with sexually.

Ingram was indicted in September by an Anderson County grand jury that alleged three counts of indecency with a teen-age girl in March and two counts of indecency with another teen-age girl in June. Both girls were under 17.

In October, he was indicted again by an Anderson County grand jury, this time alleging he intentionally and knowingly engaged in sexual activity with a girl under the age of 17 in March of 1988 and again in April of 1990.

Texas Ranger W.R. Flores, who is assigned to Anderson County, said his office received the Dallas County arrest warrant late on Nov. 25. He said he telephoned Ingram, who told him he would surrender the following morning at the Anderson County sheriff's department. Ingram failed to show up, however.

About 7 a.m. Monday, Graham said, Ingram called him at home, asking if the two could meet because he had something he wanted to discuss.

Graham, who said he has known Ingram for about two years, said they met off U.S. 175 southwest of Tyler, about 25 miles from Anderson County. Graham said he took Ingram in.

The arrest warrant stems from an investigation

by the Dallas Police Department into a report of a sexual assault of a 14-year-old girl, who is now 16, said Clark Birdsall of the public integrity division of the Dallas County district attorney's office, which handles cases involving law enforcement officers and other sworn public servant personnel accused in criminal cases.

He said due to the nature of the case he could not comment further on the investigation.

The Dallas Police Department's Child Exploitation Unit conducted the investigation and presented the case to the district attorney's office.

Sgt. B.A. Fassett of the department's Child Exploitation Unit said the alleged incident occurred in May 1996 at a motel in Dallas.

Fassett said the girl, who at the time lived in the Dallas area, reported it to Dallas authorities. However, detectives lacked sufficient information to file a case, but continued to investigate the victim's claims.

About three weeks ago, Fassett said, new information surfaced in the investigation which helped detectives to corroborate the victim's statements.

County officials say Ingram can continue to serve as constable until a jury decides his fate.

He is also employed by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice as a correctional officer with a unit in Tennessee Colony. Prison officials say since the alleged incidents did not occur on prison property, Ingram will not face an internal affairs investigation.

Ingram's legal problems should not affect his employment with TDCJ, unless he is convicted, officials said Monday.

All of the alleged charges are second-degree felonies. If convicted, Ingram could face up to 20 years in prison and a fine not to exceed \$10,000.

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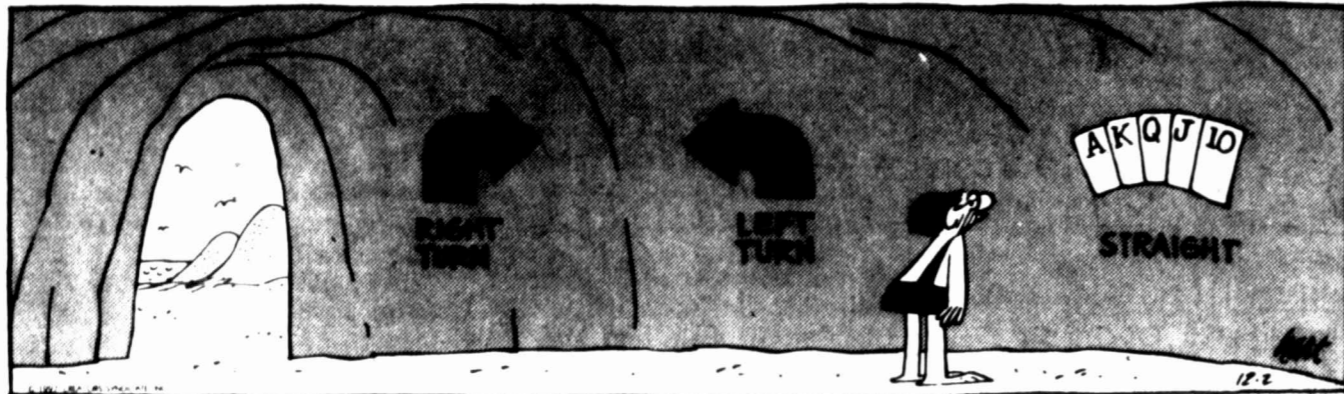
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THIS DATE IN HISTORY

The ASSOCIATED PRESS

Today is Tuesday, Dec. 2, the 336th day of 1997. There are 29 days left in the year. Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 2, 1942, a self-sustaining nuclear chain reaction was demonstrated for the first time at the University of Chicago.

On this date: In 1804, Napoleon was crowned emperor of France.

In 1823, President Monroe outlined his doctrine opposing European expansion in the Western Hemisphere.

In 1859, militant abolitionist John Brown was hanged for his raid on Harper's Ferry the previous October.

In 1927, Ford Motor Co. unveiled its "Model A" automobile, the successor to its "Model T."

In 1954, the Senate voted to condemn Sen. Joseph R. McCarthy, R-Wis., for "conduct that tends to bring the Senate into dishonor and disrepute."

In 1961, Cuban leader Fidel Castro declared himself a Marxist-Leninist who would lead Cuba to Communism.

In 1967, Cardinal Francis Spellman died in New York City at age 78.

In 1970, the Environmental Protection Agency began operating under director William Ruckelshaus.

In 1982, in the first operation of its kind, doctors at the University of Utah Medical Center implanted a permanent artificial heart. Barney Clark, a retired dentist, lived 112 days with the device.

In 1991, American hostage Joseph Cicippio, held captive in Lebanon for more than five years, was released.

Ten years ago: After a chaotic meeting that had begun the night before, the Chicago City Council elected Eugene Sawyer acting mayor, succeeding the late Harold Washington.

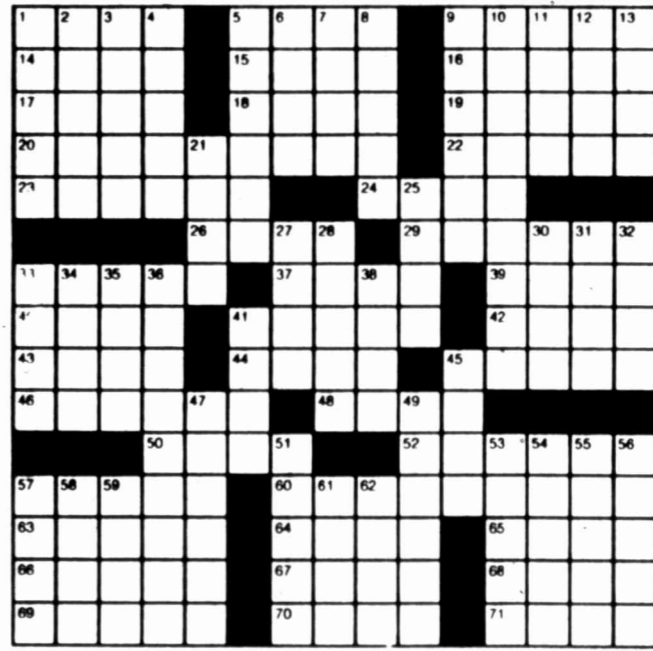
Five years ago: Germany's lower house of parliament voted overwhelmingly in favor of the Maastricht Treaty on European unity. The space shuttle Discovery blasted off with five astronauts and a spy satellite aboard.

One year ago: Financier Charles Keating Jr., a central figure in the most notorious savings-and-loan debacle of the 1980s, won a new federal trial because jurors had learned of his prior fraud conviction in state court before convicting him of fraud and racketeering.

Today's Birthdays: Actor-playwright Adolph Green is 82. Actor Leo Gordon is 75. Former Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig is 73. Actress Julie Harris is 72. Former Attorney General Edwin Meese III is 66. Sen. Harry Reid, D-Nev., is 58. Country singer John Wesley Ryles is 47. Rock singer Michael McDonald is 45. Actor Dan Butler is 43. NBC news broadcaster Stone Phillips is 43. Actor Dennis Christopher is 42. Actor Steven Bauer is 41. Rock musician Rick Savage (Def Leppard) is 37. Tennis Hall-of-Famer Tracy Austin is 35. Rock musician Nate Mendel (Foo Fighters) is 29. Rock singer Jimi Haha (Jimmie's Chicken Shack) is 29. Rapper Treach (Naughty By Nature) is 27. Tennis player Monica Seles is 24.

THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

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