

Banished teens live in wild

EVERETT, Wash. (AP) — The two Tlingit Indian teenagers banished to remote Alaska islands for a 1993 robbery are being transformed by their solitary wilderness experience, a tribal court official says.

Simon Roberts and Adrian Guthrie "have expressed a different type of remorse and regret" since they were banished in early September by a tribal court, wrote Diana Wynne James, whose husband, Rudy James, intervened in the state court case at the request of Indian elders.

Wynne James, an administrator of the Indian court, submitted the report last week to Snohomish County Superior Court Judge James Allendoerfer, who could still sentence the youths to prison when they return to his court in March 1996.

The teens pleaded guilty last spring to first-degree robbery in a 1993 baseball-bat attack on a pizza delivery driver in Everett.

The tribal court, which met in the boys' hometown of Klawock on Alaska's Prince of Wales Island, ordered them banished for 12 to 18 months to separate islands.

Earlier, Allendoerfer had agreed to give tribal justice a chance at the urging of Rudy James, though the plan was opposed by some Klawock officials who said banishment was not a Tlingit tradition and who challenged James' authority.

Guthrie and James are living in one-room cabins

heated with wood-burning stoves. Each has a shotgun, ax, pitchfork, knife and other basic tools. They eat wild foods supplemented by dried fish and canned food.

Tribal court officials made two visits to the pair last month, the most recent on Oct. 26, Wynne James wrote. Roberts received an unauthorized visit in early October from family members who helped him cut firewood.

"The tribal court gave warning that any other unauthorized visits would be subject to prosecution for interfering with the banishment process," she wrote.

Wynne James said Guthrie, who smirked and talked back during the Klawock trial, is now humble and respectful. His cabin is neat and orderly but overrun with mice. Tribal officials have authorized a cat.

"I feel I'm on my way in the thinking process, the rite of passage into manhood," Wynne James quoted Guthrie as saying. "Every kid should do this for at least one to two months to get their heads on straight. The isolation is the only way to do it."

In her report on Roberts, Wynne James wrote: "Simon reports that being away from society is being away from sex, drugs, booze and killing. He said what he values most is the fact that no one can get at him and he doesn't have to worry about being beaten up."

Tropical storm only touches South Florida

MARATHON, Fla. (AP) — Tropical Storm Gordon left little more than coastal flooding and downed power lines in South Florida after creating deadly havoc in the Caribbean.

As darkness fell and the tide rose Monday evening, waves smashed into waterfront homes and crashed along Atlantic Coast sea walls. Authorities temporarily closed an 18-mile stretch of U.S. 1, the highway connecting the mainland to the Florida Keys.

About 25,000 Florida Power & Light customers were still without power late in the day, down from 218,000 earlier, said utility spokesman Ray Golden.

Southern Bell reported scattered telephone interruptions and traffic jams were a little worse than usual. The space shuttle Atlantis, which was to land at Cape Canaveral, had to be diverted to California.

Early Tuesday morning, the storm was creeping westward at 6 mph through the Florida Straits, the 90-mile ribbon of sea between the Florida Keys and Cuba. It was headed into the Gulf of Mexico.

Sustained winds were about 50 mph with the storm's center about 165 miles south of Miami.

Gordon claimed 100 lives over the weekend in Haiti, where homes in poor neighborhoods are so flimsily built that high winds often leave death and destruction.

Floridians, still wary more than two years after Hurricane Andrew's devastation, greeted Gordon with caution.

But for most residents of the Keys, Gordon's intermittent rain and winds of up to 50 mph had little impact.

General Motors may have to recall fire-prone trucks

DETROIT (AP) — Rejecting a request from General Motors Corp., the Transportation Department said Tuesday it will go ahead with a public hearing on whether millions of GM pickup trucks should be recalled as fire-prone.

GM, which has vowed to fight a recall, had asked that the hearing be canceled so that the automaker could take the issue straight to court.

The Dec. 6 hearing promises to be a public relations disaster for GM, with appearances by families of crash victims and survivors of fiery crashes.

In a letter Tuesday to GM, the Transportation Department's general counsel said such hearings are important to find out the additional information the government needs before deciding on a recall.

GM responded in a statement that the hearing would be a waste of time and an "orchestrated talk show" in which plaintiffs' lawyers and industry critics will vie for the microphone.

Transportation Secretary Federico Pena scheduled the session last month and declared that 1973-87 GM pickups present an "unreasonable risk" of fire or explosion in side collisions because their gas tanks are mounted outside the frame. He blamed the sidesaddle design for 150 deaths.

GM insists the trucks are safer than most vehicles on the road.

Pena has acknowledged that the trucks met federal safety standards, but he said the law requires that they be safe in "real world conditions" as well.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has been investigating the trucks since 1992, when consumer groups petitioned for a recall. The agency last year asked GM to recall the trucks voluntarily, but the automaker refused.

About 9 million of the trucks were built. GM changed the gas-tank design beginning with 1988 models. The company believes about 6 million of the 1973-87 pickups are still in use.

Anti-abortion demonstrators face trial under new clinic access law

MILWAUKEE, Wis. (AP) — The nation's first anti-abortion demonstrators to face trial under a new federal clinic-protection law refused comment when asked to help clear a way into a building, a policeman testified.

The six defendants, including one from Washington state, denied Monday in U.S. District Court that they broke the law during the demonstration.

Judge J.P. Stadtmueller, presiding without a jury, told lawyers to prepare for closing arguments today.

The Federal Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act (FACE) prohibits preventing access to clinics. The maximum penalty is six months in prison and \$10,000.

The six defendants were arrested June 4 outside an east-side clinic where protesters were chained to two cars.

Officer Stephen Basting told Stadtmueller the entrances were blocked for about four hours.

None of the defendants replied when asked if they would help clear the entrance, Basting said.

Attorney Rene L. Wright argued his client, Marilyn R. Hatch, 44, of Seattle, Wash., was simply sitting and praying.

Attorney Eugene Pigatti insisted his clients Dale Pultz, 33, and James Soderna, 32, both of Milwaukee, and Colin L. Hudson, 47, of Weaverville, N.C., engaged in peaceful protest and threatened no one.

Defendants Michael C. Suhy, 20, of Canton, Mich., and Ronald D. Brock, 56, of Milwaukee said federal courts lack jurisdiction because the clinic is not government property and is not engaged in interstate commerce.

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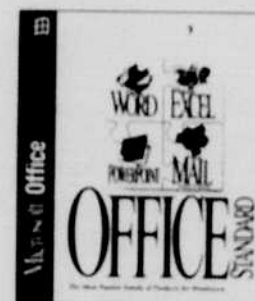
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