

Billie Sol Estes Leads Normal Life, Attends Church

Editor's Note: Few men have fallen as fast and as far from the pinnacle of respect and power as Billie Sol Estes. How is Estes weathering the storm? This is a report from his home town.

By JAMES T. YOUNG
Pecos, Tex. (UPI)—Last March, one of the most regular churchgoers in Pecos was a wealthy young businessman named Billie Sol Estes. Four months, three indictments and a congressional investigation later, he still is.

There are enough charges already against Estes, 37, to put him behind bars for life if he is convicted. Grand juries are looking for new charges. He is bankrupt and most of his possessions will soon be sold. But he manages, thanks to \$120,000 bond, to lead an almost normal life.

On Sunday morning, his big white Cadillac pulls up in front of the Pecos Church of Christ at Fourth and Bois D'Arc sts.

He, his wife and his five children — one son and four daughters, ranging in age from 5 to 12 — attend Sunday school.

Attend Church
Then they attend church. Sunday night, the Estes family is back for night services. Wednesday night, the whole family is back for prayer meeting.

If Estes is worried, he does not show it in church. He wears expensive black or dark blue suits. Sometimes he spruces up with a red necktie.

The congregation and his pastor, the Rev. W. S. Boyett, greet him with outstretched hands and smiling faces. The only difference is that Estes is no longer an elder of the church.

He resigned as an elder while he was in jail in early April.

What are Estes' troubles four months after they started piling up?

First is a federal indictment of 29 counts, charging mail fraud, conspiracy and transporting fraudulent documents interstate.

Three co-defendants — Coleman McSpadden, Ruel Alexander and Harold Orr — pleaded guilty July 13 to five counts of the indictments while Estes pleaded innocent to all 29. Their guilty plea staggered Estes.

If U.S. District Judge R. E. Thomason gives McSpadden, Alexander and Orr the maximum, it will be 40 years each in prison and a total fine of \$41,000 each. There is a widespread belief that McSpadden, Alexander and Orr may be willing to testify against Estes when he comes to trial.

There is an additional federal indictment of eight counts of interstate transportation of fraudulent documents against Estes and the others. Federal officials, it was understood, will dismiss it because the charges are incorporated in the 29-count indictment.

There are four untried state indictments of four counts each against Estes at Pecos charging swindling, theft, embezzlement and theft by bailee. "Theft by bailee" means theft of property left in his trust.

Fined \$554,000
A federal grand jury in Dallas is considered indicting Estes again. At least one state grand jury is investigating. The federal government has fined him \$554,000 for crooked cotton acreage allotment deals.

He is in bankruptcy and his creditors are busy filing foreclosures against him. Estes has admitted debts of \$38,387,935.87. He claims assets of \$20,793,155.95. At best, \$67,594,779.92 of his debts will never be paid.

Most of his unsecured creditors — those without mortgages — will be left out in the cold.

But there is no sign Estes is suffering — yet. His brother John, an Abilene, Tex., dentist, pays a \$177 a month note on his big house. There was a time when even the Estes maid ran errands in a Cadillac. Estes is now down to the one he drives to church, a 1961 model.

He will keep the house, its furnishings and probably the Cadillac, despite the impending sale of his assets. In Texas, the house and furnishings may not be sold out from under him. If the court judges he needs the Cadillac to make a living, he can keep it too.

Many people in Pecos think he has money put away. Commercial Solvents corporation, which furnished most of the fertilizer he sold to farmers, loaned him \$400,000 just before he was exposed. The \$400,000 has not turned up in any bank deposits, although Estes has sworn that he has no hidden assets.

Never Seen
Estes is never seen on the streets of Pecos. He has a patio and swimming pool behind his big home where he whiles away the time. His children act as if nothing has happened.

They play in front of the house and stay overnight with friends. Friends stay overnight with them.

He still has many friends in Pecos. There was a time when nearly everybody in Pecos was for him. The balance now appears to have changed so that the majority of the townspeople is against him.

Openly, Estes does not appear to hold a grudge against those most responsible for his downfall. He shook hands

recently in a courtroom with Oscar Griffin, former editor of the semi-weekly newspaper Pecos Independent.

Griffin probably is as responsible as anyone for calling the attention of Estes' creditors to his shaky empire. Griffin now works for the Houston Chronicle.

Estes even asked Griffin how he was getting along in his new job. But Estes will not be interviewed.

Best Known
Estes had made Pecos one of the best known small cities in the country. Pecos apparently has not been hurt by his exposure.

Ray McPherson, executive vice president of the First National bank, told stockholders recently that the scandal even appeared to have helped the local economy.

He said retail sales in Pecos were the highest in history, up 15-20 per cent. Hotels and motels, have more business the first six months of this year than they did last.

McPherson said, the future looks bright for Pecos. It is doubtful that it does for Estes, but if he is worried he does not show it.

keep you cool and contented.

Near the end of the hearing, the subcommittee heard about another type of mission, this time from Col. W. J. Woolwine, treasurer of the U. S. Military Academy.

Testifying in behalf of a request for funds to modernize a government-owned hotel at West Point, Woolwine boldly asserted that "the mission of the hotel is to provide rooms."

Although Woolwine didn't say so, I deem it logical to assume that a corollary mission of the hotel is to keep the occupants of the rooms warm and contented.

His mission, however, definitely doesn't include keeping them cool. Witnesses testified that a proposal to air-condition the hotel was rejected by Army headquarters, whose mission is to curtail unnecessary spending.

officiating at their births in the hospital. The girls are graduating from the hospital's school of nursing. Dr. Rosene has been on the hospital staff for 35 years. (UPI)



BIRTHS RECALLED — Dr. Gordon L. Rosene, chairman of the Swedish Convent hospital, department of gynecology, at Chicago, tells student nurses Grace Matsen, Joyce Ohn and Barbara Lindell, "you were just this big" as he recalls

officiating at their births in the hospital. The girls are graduating from the hospital's school of nursing. Dr. Rosene has been on the hospital staff for 35 years. (UPI)

Now They're Missions

Pentagon Goes Through Phases of Task Forces, Operations, Missions

By DICK WEST
Washington (UPI) — At the Pentagon, everyone and everything has a "mission." This shows how much the military lexicon has changed since World War II.

During the war, you'll recall, everyone and everything was a "task force."

In the beginning, the armed forces had more tasks than

forces. But toward the end they had more forces than tasks.

It finally got to the point where two WAC corporals couldn't go to the water cooler without being called a task force.

After the war there wasn't much need for task forces, so everyone and everything became an "operation."

No commander in the past 15 years has planned a troop maneuver, training exercise, fire drill, cocktail party or trip to the PX without labeling it "Operation Something-or-Other."

I understand that when a patient in a military hospital is being prepared for surgery it is called "Operation Operation."

Now it appears that operations are being replaced by missions. At least I got that impression from a volume of testimony just released by the House subcommittee on military construction appropriations.

Early in the hearing, Assistant Navy Secretary Kennedy E. Belieu perplexed one of the subcommittee members by referring to the mission of the family housing program.

Asked to elaborate, Belieu explained that "the mission of a house is to keep you warm and contented."

He added, however, that "in Alaska it is different than it is in Florida." I took this to mean that in Florida the mission of a house might be to

ing shape and the upper branches of the Rogue are also improving from the recent rain.

The station will be open throughout the week. Travelers should feel free to ask for any information needed.

Union Creek District — All campgrounds and roads are open on the Union Creek district. Clear skies and warm weather make camping and fishing conditions ideal.

Forest Highways May Be Slippery Due To Recent Rain

Recent rains have made some of the gravel and dirt roads in the Rogue River National forest slippery, according to the weekly recreation report from the forest.

Visitors are encouraged to check on highway conditions with the district rangers before traveling in some of the forest areas.

The recreational report by district:

Applegate District — The Glade Creek rd. has been graded and is open to all vehicular traffic. All other roads are in good condition, as they have been graded; but logging traffic is still heavy on the Beaver Creek, Thompson Creek, Stevens Fork, and Sturgis Fork rds.

All trails are open, but there will be logging across the Sturgis Fork trail. Travelers are encouraged to use caution when traveling this trail.

The cool weather has discouraged many picnickers and swimmers, it was noted. The campgrounds have not been receiving as heavy use as they received several weeks ago. The river has cooled down to the point that only the hardy souls are swimming. The weather has lowered the fire danger, but a careless match, cigarette or campfire will start a fire.

Fishing is fair in the smaller streams and all lakes.

Butte Falls District — Surfacing has been completed on the Fish Lake rd. between Butte Falls and the Willow Lake junction. The rest of the Fish Lake rd. is in good condition. Heavy rains have made the unsurfaced roads in the district slippery. People planning to travel these roads should check road conditions at the district office before starting out.

Stream fishing has been good the past week. Several limits of six ten inch trout have been taken on flies on the upper South Fork of the Rogue river. Fishing has been slow at Willow lake, but may pick up during the cool

weather.

All of the campgrounds are open. New visitor registers have been installed at several of the campgrounds and visitors are encouraged to sign them.

Prospect District — All roads on the district are open, with heavy weekday logging traffic on Woodruff and Jim Creek rds.

The weather has been cool with rain the last three days. Many of the smaller streams are now in good fishing shape.

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