



COLBY FREE PRESS

Male identified, charges filed, both still on the run

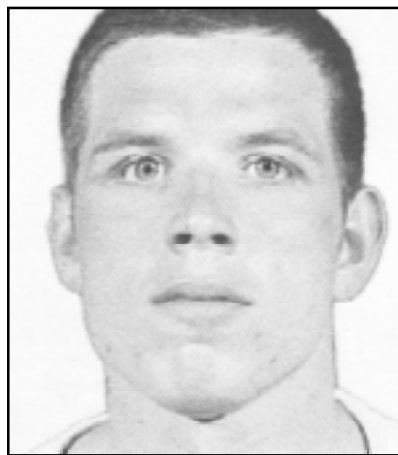
By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

Charges were filed in Thomas County on Wednesday afternoon on one of the two suspects involved in a high-speed chase more than a week ago; however, both people are still on the loose.

Kristopher Aaron Lambert, 21, is being charged with aggravated burglary, aggravated assault, kidnapping, one count each of felony theft and misdemeanor theft and two counts of misdemeanor criminal damage to property, said Thomas County Sheriff Tom Jones today.

The charges stem from the incident in Thomas County on Wednesday, Aug. 8, when the couple eluded authorities in a chase on Interstate 70 just before noon and then held a teen-age



Left to right: Kristopher Aaron Lambert, 21, is charged with assault, kidnapping, burglary and other crimes associated with the high-speed chase in Thomas County last week. The sketch of Lambert (middle) was distributed last week after the two (female at far right) managed to slip away from authorities here.

girl at knifepoint and stole her vehicle. Later authorities discovered the girl's

vehicle, a black 1998 Ford Escort and learned the couple again allegedly

stole a white Jeep Cherokee in Hoxie. Local law enforcement officers be-

came aware of the couple following a report of a gas skip in Grinnell involving a 1993 Mazda pickup. The chase here started when Thomas County Sheriff's Deputy Ken Patton stopped the vehicle, but the driver sped off when asked to get out of the car.

After a short chase, the couple crashed through a fence, driving cross country before stopping at a farmhouse and accosting the teen-age girl.

The female suspect has been identified, but Jones did not release her name today. Charges are pending on her as the investigation continues, he said.

"Lambert and his female accomplice are still at large and being sought through the combined efforts of local law enforcement and the Kansas Bureau of Investigation," Jones said.

The man is described as white, 5'11" tall, 150 pounds with sandy hair. The

female suspect is white, 5'5", 110-120 pounds with long red hair and heavily freckled face.

"Any information leading to the arrest of these two fugitives will be greatly appreciated by the law enforcement agencies," Jones said.

However, Jones and other agencies are cautioning people to stay clear of the suspects since they are considered dangerous. Lambert and his female accomplice are also wanted in connection with the theft of a vehicle on Sunday, Aug. 5, after an older couple in Wausau, Wis., reported their vehicle missing. The owners of the Mazda had gone for a walk and when they returned, the vehicle was gone.

Authorities are reminding everyone that charges are "merely accusations and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty."

Kickapoo water project could benefit northeastern Kansas

HORTON (AP) — Nancy Bear looks at the small dam across the shallow Delaware River and worries whether there will be enough water for those living on the Kickapoo Indian Reservation.

"Last year the river was so low that we were sucking muddy water," said Bear, tribal council chairperson. "It's an ongoing continuous problem if we don't have adequate rainfall."

Bear said the 30-year-old, 6-foot high dam barely provides enough water for the reservation's 800 residents and casino — an average daily use of 120,000 gallons.

When the dam was built there were about half the number of people living on the reservation and it met the needs, she said.

"But now with more people, the casino, housing and other things, it is totally inadequate," Bear said. "Before we can build and grow, we need a solution to this."

Talk of water problems in northeastern Kansas isn't unique, but the Pikitanoi Project started several years ago by the Kickapoo is. Pikitanoi is a Kickapoo word for muddy river water.

The idea for the project came from the similar but larger Mni Wiconi Project in South Dakota.

When finished, it will pipe water from the Missouri River to three Indian reservations and parts of nine South Dakota counties. Bear said the project originally envisioned piping water some 30 miles from the Missouri River to the reservation using tribal treaty rights to the water. The water also could be used by nearby towns and water districts.

"The main reason is to have an adequate source for the Kickapoo people," Bear said. "But we also want

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Paul Evans,
Horton City Administrator

to help our neighbors."

Paul Evans, Horton city administrator, said his town, about six miles east of the reservation, has enough water this year, but last year was a different story.

"We were in desperate condition last year, but just about everyone was," he said. "You're always going to have water problems when you have a dry spell, especially if you are relying on surface water."

Evans said area's average annual rainfall from 1961-2000 was 36.9 inches while the average annual evaporation was 35.05 inches.

"It's not a question of if, but when," he said. "If we don't need it now, we may need it in 50 years. It's going to be an issue in northeast Kansas for some time to come."

The Kickapoo conducted two public meetings about five years ago and there was much support for the idea, recalled Jim Cobler, president of Wholesale Water District No. 21.

He said the wholesale district is composed of about 34 area water districts and towns and was an outgrowth of that meeting.

"Everyone thinks the eastern part of Kansas has adequate water, but the problem is that it isn't in the right spot. It isn't available in the quantities that

they need," Cobler said.

He said the most practical solution is a regional plan with a large pipeline and one or two large water treatment plants, replacing many smaller ones unable to keep up with demands and ever increasing federal drinking water regulations.

The Army Corps of Engineers is doing a preliminary study, financed jointly by the state, the wholesale district and Corps, to consider options and come up with recommendations.

"There are some communities and waters districts on the drought vulnerable list and that's one reason we decided to go ahead and do a study with the Corps to identify the best approach," said Kathy Tucker-Vogel of the Kansas Water Office.

She said the Water Office also wants the study to go beyond the Missouri River and consider other sources such as Perry and Tuttle Creek lakes. The study is expected to be completed early next year.

"Nobody is committed to any particular source at this point," said Cobler, who has worked with various rural water districts for 35 years.

Unanswered questions include ownership, who pays for the project, how much it would cost and how long it would take to complete.

Informant in bribery case identified

HUTCHINSON (AP) — The confidential informant who produced information that helped tie Reno County Sheriff Larry Leslie to a bribery case has come forward.

Detective Howard Shipley, a member of the county's drug task force, confirmed Wednesday that he is the person who gave invoices, credit card bills, other documents and the sheriff's checkbook to then-Reno County District Attorney Tim Chambers. Chambers is now a Reno County district judge.

The documents allegedly tie the sheriff to almost \$285,000 in payments from Hutchinson attorney Gerald Hertach to steer the county's jail contract to MgtGp, also known as MGI.

Leslie is charged with 34 counts of bribery. MgtGp and Hertach, who is secretary-treasurer of the company, also face 34 bribery counts. The Reno County Commission has filed a civil lawsuit against Leslie.

The revelation of Shipley's identity came a day after Senior Reno County District Court Judge Michael Barbara ordered the state to disclose the informant's identity to attorneys for Leslie, Hertach and Hertach's MgtGp Inc.

Shipley called the decision to come forward difficult.

He declined to elaborate on the information he provided, anticipating he would be endorsed as a gagged witness in the case.

"If I'm not a witness, I will be," he said. Chambers first relayed Shipley's information to state and federal authorities three years ago, but nothing happened.

In January 2001, Chambers, frustrated by the failure of state and federal authorities to act on the information, jump-started the investigation with a letter to the Kansas Bureau of Investigation.

The KBI's preliminary inquiry led to an inquisition, which resulted in the mid-May charges against the sheriff and MgtGp.

The informant issue prompted Barbara to postpone a preliminary hearing that had been scheduled for Wednesday. It has not been rescheduled.

The final act



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

The Colby Municipal Swimming Pool closed for the season on Wednesday and, according to Stephanie Unruh, manager, it was a busy day. "I think everybody just wanted to get in here on the last day," she said. **ABOVE:** Omar Fercha of Colby flexed his muscles as he jumped off the high dive. **BELOW:** Ross Wright, also of Colby, demonstrated his skills off the board by doing a front flip. Other swimmers showed off their talents as well by diving off the boards, belly-flopping and cannon balling.



Briefly

Weather: Good forecast

Partly cloudy conditions with less than a 30 percent chance of thunderstorms through Saturday is the weather story for the Colby area, reports the National Weather Service. Lows should be in the 55 to 60-degree range with highs in the middle 80s. Winds won't be much of a problem as they blow in from the southwest at 5-15 mph. Wednesday's high was 90 and the overnight low this morning was a very cool 52 degrees, just two degrees off the record low for the date of 50 set in 1979. There was no additional precipitation, leaving the month's total at 0.29 inches. The soil tem-

perature at the four-inch depth is averaging 79 degrees. The records for Aug. 16: 106 in 1929 and 50 in 1979. (*The daily temperatures, precipitation and records are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.*)

Pool opening uncertain

Colby Community College officials said today that re-opening of the school's pool is still uncertain. A report in Wednesday's Free Press indicated the pool might open by Friday of this week, but the college said that probably won't be the case.

The college will inform the public of the pool's reopening as soon as that date is known.

Food distribution set

Commodities will be distributed from 2-3 p.m. Monday, Aug. 20, at the Senior Progress Center in Colby. Expected commodities are rice cereal, corn, peas, beef stew, cranberries, instant milk and applesauce. Eligible persons may receive them according to the following income guidelines, which took effect July 1: household size — one, \$905; two \$1,219; three \$1,533; four, \$1,848; five, \$2,162; six,

\$2,476; seven \$2,790; eight, \$3,104. For additional family members, add \$315.

Awareness team meets Friday

The Community Awareness Team will meet at noon, Friday, Aug. 17, in the student union at Colby Community College. At the meeting, members will be discussing upcoming events. The team, said Janet Worthy, coordinator, is continually looking for new members or people wanting to help with a specific event and, if interested, call her at 462-8152.

