

Tumey retrial set to start as scheduled

Proceedings slated to begin Dec. 13

By Rick Smith
Gazette staff writer

TIPTON — Dean Ray Tumey's retrial for the 1980 murder of a young Davenport woman will begin here as scheduled on Dec. 13 in Cedar County District Court.

A first Cedar County jury deadlocked Oct. 1 on Tumey's culpability in the murder of Sandra Jo Pittman. The jury voted 7-5 for acquittal before giving up.

Tumey, then 35, and Pittman, 17, were acquaintances whose paths crossed while they lived in a Davenport rooming house in the summer of 1980.

Her body was discovered in a Cedar County rest stop along Highway 30 west of Clarence on Sept. 17, 1980.

She had been stabbed and strangled to death.

Tumey, who began a history of hospitalizations six years earlier for paranoid schizophrenia, was a suspect in the crime from the start, but was not arrested

and charged until May of this year.

He was not charged despite the fact that he allegedly confessed to law officers in 1990 and allegedly reaffirmed the confession to a prosecutor two years later. He was hospitalized both times.

Tumey's attorneys have dismissed the confessions as the rantings and attention-getting of a sick man.

In an interview with a prosecution psychiatrist prior to his first trial, Tumey said he witnessed three men kill Pittman.

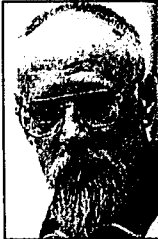
Prosecutors have said Tumey was with Pittman the evening before her death and they have hinted that he killed her because she denied him sexual favors.

During the trial, the defense pointed the finger at others in Pittman's circle, one that included drugs, crimes and domestic assault. One boyfriend had talked about killing her, the defense emphasized.

In recent years Tumey, now 54, has lived near the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Knoxville and has taken medicine to control the paranoia and delusions of his mental illness.

He has been housed in the Cedar County Jail under medication since his arrest in May.

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Dean Ray Tumey
Accused of 1980 murder

Conger celebrating legends, traditions

By Mary Ziellinski

News correspondent

WASHINGTON, Iowa — The 26th annual Christmas celebration at the Conger House Museum has been scheduled for 1 to 5 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday and Dec. 11 and 12.

The historic home is decorated throughout all three floors, featuring displays of presidential Christmas cards, Christmas plates, Nativity sets, Santas from other countries and Advent calendars. All of it is in keeping with this year's theme of Legends and Traditions.

The tree in the front parlor is decorated with antique ornaments used by the Conger and Wilson families for whom the historic mansion was home. Other trees decorated by local organizations feature a number of period ornaments as well.

Volunteers from Washington County Historical Society, which owns the house, will host

the event and will serve hot wassail and cookies in the dining room. Christmas carols will be played on the 1800s pump organ. This year's special Washington County Historic Site ornament features Sunset Park. It is the ninth in a series of brass ornaments and celebrates the park's 100th anniversary.

Admission is \$2 for adults and \$1 for children 12 and younger.

Single file Christmas tree sale at C.R. store



Gazette photo by David Lee Hartlage

Kevin Hegland, general merchandise assistant manager at Hy-Vee on Collins Road in Cedar Rapids, hangs price signs for recently delivered Christmas trees.

TWA security measures investigated

By Steve Gravelle

Gazette staff writer

CEDAR RAPIDS — The Federal Aviation Administration is investigating TWA's security procedures after a man was stopped from boarding a flight at the Eastern Iowa Airport with a loaded handgun in his carry-on bag.

The man told airport security he'd carried the gun into the airport on an earlier flight from Florida.

"There's no way for us to substantiate that, but we did include that statement in our report, and the FAA will look into it," said Capt. Mark Eckstrom, head of airport security.

"We have opened up an investigation regarding the carrier," said Tony Molinaro, an FAA spokesman in Chicago.

Eckstrom said staff at the airport's screening station stopped the man the morning of Nov. 16 after the baggage X-ray detected a small semi-automatic handgun.

The gun was loaded. The man was not identified because no criminal charges were filed.

"We determined he was not a threat," Eckstrom said. "He did have a concealed weapons permit from his home state."

The Federal Aviation Administration's investigation was prompted by an Eastern Iowa Airport incident in which a gun was found in a boarding passenger's bag.

After an interview, the man left Cedar Rapids on a later flight. The gun, which the man said he'd forgotten was in his carry-on bag, was turned over to the FAA.

The man could face an FAA civil penalty of up to \$10,000, Molinaro said. The FAA is investigating the man's claim that he'd carried the gun aboard his flight from Fort Meyers, Fla., to Iowa.

Susan Sanders, spokeswoman for Southwest Florida International Airport, said the airport hasn't been notified of an investigation — as it wouldn't, in most cases.

"We wouldn't know anything about it, unless the security screeners told us," said Sander.

Airport screening services are hired by the airlines.

A spokesman for the screening service in Fort Meyers did not return a call Thursday, and a TWA spokesman declined comment.

Eckstrom said he's happy with the performance of the screeners at the Eastern Iowa Airport.

"This screening point at this airport is really good," he said. Eckstrom said the screeners pass regular checks designed to test their ability to recognize the X-ray images of guns, grenades and other weapons.

"We've probably found two (guns) in the last four, five years" as passengers tried to board a flight, Eckstrom said.

Passengers may carry guns in checked baggage.

Eckstrom said the weapons must be locked in a hard-sided

case, with ammunition stowed in a separate bag.

The incident also reflects the airport's safety record in the wake of an FAA report released Wednesday that told how Transportation Department investigators penetrated security easily at major U.S. airports such as Chicago's O'Hare International Airport and John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York.

Larry Mullendore, airport director, said Thursday he is aware of the report.

He said the FAA has made similar inspections of The Eastern Iowa Airport and was satisfied with the results.

Mullendore does not foresee any security problems at the airport in the future.

"Our internal checks have been satisfactory and our FAA checks have been satisfactory," he said. "As far as I'm concerned, we're in compliance."

Gazette staff writer Kristopher Owens contributed to this story.

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