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National Briefing

Illinois: Drew Peterson hearing continued / Alabama: Three accused in Army bribery case / Texas: Couple held in shooting of four off-roaders / Arizona: Pilots faulted in deadly crash of medical helicopters

May 09, 2009

ILLINOIS

Peterson hearing continued

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Drew Peterson will have to wait more than a week to answer allegations that he drowned his third wife in a bathtub.

A judge continued the former police sergeant's arraignment on murder charges to May 18 because neither of Peterson's attorneys were at the hearing.

Peterson was arrested Thursday in connection with the 2004 death of Kathleen Savio. He's also a suspect in the 2007 disappearance of his fourth wife, Stacy Ann Peterson. He's denied wrongdoing.

Wearing a red jail jumpsuit, Peterson was brought into the court handcuffed and shackled around the legs. He told reporters he was getting "three squares a day" and joked about his "spiffy outfit" and "bling."

ALABAMA

Three accused in Army bribe case

An Alabama Army major and his wife are accused of taking \$2.8 million in bribes from a Georgia contractor who received about \$21 million for delivering bottled water and building fences in Kuwait and Iraq.

An indictment accused Maj. Eddie Pressley, 39, of Harvest and his 37-year-old wife, Eurica, of accepting cash and other bribes in exchange for funneling business to companies owned by Terry Hall, 43, of Snellville, Ga.

All three were named on bribery and fraud charges in an indictment unsealed Wednesday in Birmingham. Attorneys representing the Pressleys and Hall didn't immediately return calls seeking comment.

TEXAS

Four off-roaders shot; couple held

A couple has been accused of opening fire and wounding four people, including a 7-year-old boy and a 5-year-old girl, who they mistakenly thought were trespassing on their property near Dayton.

The victims, who were off-roading near a residential area about 40 miles northeast of Houston, were struck with shotgun pellets late Thursday after stopping their vehicles near the Trinity River so the children could go to the bathroom, said Liberty County Chief Deputy Ken DeFoor.

Police said Sheila Muhs, 45, fired once with a 12-gauge shotgun, then handed it to her husband, Gale, also 45. DeFoor said Sheila

Muhs called 911 and told the dispatcher, "They're out here tearing up the levee, so I shot them."

The Muhs are charged with aggravated assault with a deadly weapon. Donald Coffey Jr., 7, was in critical condition after being shot in the head. Patrick Cammack, a friend of the boy's father who was driving a separate vehicle, was also shot in the head and in critical condition.

ARIZONA

Chopper pilots faulted in crash

The pilots of two medical helicopters that crashed in midair, killing all seven people aboard, are both to blame for failing to see and avoid each other near a hospital, federal investigators said.

In its report, the National Transportation Safety Board found that one pilot erred in failing to contact the hospital's communications center and the other took an unusual approach to Flagstaff Medical Center from the south instead of from the east. The helicopters collided about half a mile from the hospital on June 29, each carrying a patient.

-- *times wire reports*

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