

# DEEDS OF 'AREA WOMAN'

New Superhero Is Born from a Nation's Newspapers

— Living, Page D-1



# 'SKINS SCALPED'

Underdog Rams Roll to a 30-26 Win

— Sports, Page C-1

159th Year, No. 70

METRO

IMPROVING Showers, then sun; high 50. Weather: A-2

# THE POST-STANDARD

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TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 1987

30 CENTS

## Parolee Charged in Adams Woman's Death

By MIKE McANDREW  
And TOM FOSTER

A Jamesville man released six weeks ago from state prison was accused Monday of strangling a Jefferson County woman who had befriended him while he was behind bars.

Philip J. Guinta Jr., 45, of 4506 O'Dell Place was charged with second-degree murder in connection with the Saturday morning slaying of Susan Groff, 35, of 54 N. Main St., Adams.

Groff's body was found at about 6 a.m. Saturday in a wooded area off Whiskey Hollow Road in the town of Van Buren. She had been sexually assaulted, according to Sgt. Robert Marquart of the state police.

Guinta, who had twice been denied parole, was released Oct. 13 from prison after serving six years of a 4½-to-9-year sentence on a first-degree rape conviction, according to a state Department of Corrections spokeswoman.

Guinta had to be freed under a state law that requires inmates to be paroled after serving two-thirds of their maximum sentence, according to Edward Elwin, executive director of the state Division of Parole.

Groff, the mother of a 12-year-old son, was aware that Guinta was an ex-convict, according to a source who requested anonymity.

In fact, Groff first met Guinta through letters she sent to him while he was in Mid-

state Correctional Facility in Oneida County, the source said.

"They corresponded with each other," the source said. "That, to the best of my knowledge, is how they met."

Clara Groff, the victim's grandmother, said her granddaughter could have met Guinta by responding to a newspaper ad that asked people to write to him in prison.

"I know she answered other ads like that. I don't know why," Groff said. "Probably she was lonely."

When Guinta was released, he started dating Susan Groff, she said.

"He seemed to be a good sort of fellow," said Clara Groff, 84, who said she met Guinta once, about two weeks ago.

Friday night, Guinta and Susan Groff were supposed to have dinner together at a Syracuse restaurant, according to Groff's brother, Ronnie Pearson of Redfield.

But Groff was last seen alive at about 8 p.m. Friday at the tiny house where she and her son lived, police said.

Investigators believe Guinta murdered Groff at about 2 a.m. Saturday and then drove her about 60 miles south to Onondaga County, where he dumped her body by the remote gravel road.

Her body was found shortly after 6 a.m. Saturday by a hunter and several others.

Police apprehended Guinta Monday morning as he was driving to Armani (Continued on Page A-5)



MICHELLE FRANKFURTER/The Post-Standard  
Phillip Guinta, left, is led to his arraignment Monday evening.

## Courts Join Age Of Video Camera Coverage Starts Here Dec. 1

By CLAIRE BRENNAN

County Judge William J. Burke has his red ties and blue shirts all lined up to start wearing next week with his basic black robe.

Burke knows people in blue supposedly look better on television

■ Routine in 43 states/A-4.

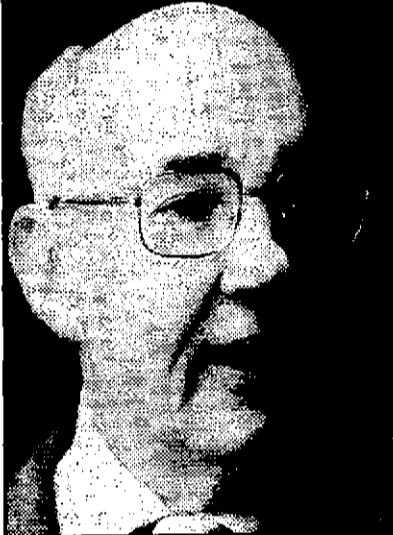
■ No more sketch artists/A-4.

than those who wear white. And on Dec. 1, he is likely to become the first judge in Onondaga County to conduct court under the scrutiny of television cameras.

The lenses will focus on him first because he is scheduled to preside over a murder trial Dec. 1, when the state will begin an 18-month experiment allowing the media to use cameras and tape recorders to cover court proceedings.

"I think it's going to have an effect on the way things are done in court. I don't know what it will be. If I did, I'd try to control it," Burke said. "I just can't picture that you're going to move cameras into a courtroom and not have an effect. What's the effect going to be — good or bad? I don't know."

Burke's boss, William Roy, the administrative judge of the 5th Judicial District, hopes to minimize the effect on court proceedings. He is meeting this week with attorneys and media representa-



JUDGE WILLIAM BURKE

ties for trial under new rules

tives to review the state's guidelines — a list of rules 8 feet long on a computer printout.

Onondaga County will be among the first areas in the state admitting cameras to trial courts. Courts in New York City and three other counties will begin the same day. All other counties will be phased in by June 1.

The rules state cameras and electronic recording equipment are being allowed in courts because "an enhanced public understanding of the judicial system is important in maintaining a high level of public confidence in the judiciary."

But some within the system question how a television or radio broadcast, or a photograph in a newspaper, can help anyone understand the courts.

Burke, who joked about the blue shirts, said if people want to learn about the legal system, they should sit in court for a while.

"They're too lazy to come down and get educated, so we're going to let them sit on their couch and get educated," he said.

But Burke said he favors the (Continued on Page A-4)

## Atlanta Inmates Riot

### Meese Halts Deportation Of Cubans

Los Angeles Times

ATLANTA — Cuban inmates fighting deportation to their homeland staged a bloody riot at the Atlanta Federal Penitentiary Monday, seizing dozens of hostages and setting fire to the prison.

At least one prisoner was killed, according to unconfirmed reports. Several hospitals reported admitting dozens of Cubans — eight suffering gunshot wounds, along with two prison guards who were slightly injured.

In Washington, Attorney General Edwin Meese III offered a moratorium on returning any of the refugees to Cuba soon, in an effort to help quell the Atlanta riot and regain control of the federal detention center in Oakdale, La., where inmates were holding hostages for the third day and threatening to kill them if demands were not met.

Meese promised that before a renewed U.S.-Cuba agreement goes into effect, the inmates will first be given "a full, fair and equitable review" of their cases.

The Oakdale riots began the day after the Reagan administration announced an agreement with the Cuban government for the return of about 2,500 of the (Continued on Page A-8)



AP Laserphoto  
Smoke pours from the U.S. Penitentiary in Atlanta Monday after an uprising among Cuban inmates. At least one inmate was reported killed.

### The Riots Story

■ For many, the flight to freedom via the Mariel boatlift has led to a life behind bars/A-8.

■ The Atlanta penitentiary has been a black hole in the federal prison system for decades/A-8.

■ Six Cubans who escaped a Texas detention center were still missing Monday/A-8.

## Ousted Union Leader Under Federal Probe

By MIKE GROGAN

Federal agents are investigating whether Walter J. Butler, the ex-president of the Service Employees International Union Local 200 and formerly one of the area's top union officials, misappropriated union funds, an SEIU spokesman said Monday.

"There is an investigation of Butler," said Dennis Eames, secretary-treasurer of SEIU Local 200-B. "They (federal agents) are looking at Butler. No doubt about it. We've been cooperating with them."

A federal source, who spoke only on the condition he not be identified, confirmed there is a federal investigation involving Butler. He would not elaborate.

Despite repeated attempts, Butler, of 7382 Highbridge Terrace, Fayetteville, could not be reached for comment.

Eames said federal agents began contacting union officials in

the spring and subpoenaed numerous records during the late summer. He said federal officials have said they are investigating whether Butler misused the union's pension and health and welfare funds during his 35-year tenure.

Eames also said the agents are investigating whether Butler's son, James, received a union salary or any benefits while he attended a law school out of state.

The federal investigation is the latest development in Butler's controversial career in organized labor.

First elected union leader in 1951, Butler is credited with building a local that represented 17,000 blue-collar workers from Poughkeepsie to the Canadian border and from Burlington, Vt., to western Pennsylvania. The local was composed of nurses, nurses' aides, custodians, racetrack workers and

(Continued on Page A-5)

## Strong Earthquake Rocks Southern California

WESTMORLAND, Calif. (AP) — An earthquake more powerful than one that caused heavy damage near Los Angeles Oct. 1 jolted Southern California Monday, cracking windows and knocking items off shelves, officials said.

There were no immediate reports of injuries or serious damage.

The earthquake struck at 5:54 p.m. (8:54 p.m. EST) and registered a preliminary 6.0 on the Richter scale, said U.S. Geological Survey spokesman Don Finley in Washington. It was centered near Westmorland, about 90 miles east of San Diego, he said.

The Oct. 1 quake that caused heavy damage in the Los Angeles suburb of Whittier registered 5.9.

Early reports said the earthquake was felt over a wide area, including Los Angeles, San Diego and Palm Springs, Calif.; Yuma and Parker in Arizona; and Las Vegas, Nev., 330 miles to the north, said Finley.

"It was shaking like crazy up here," said Mike Baker of the Sunset Room on the 27th floor of the Landmark Hotel in Las Vegas.

"There was a big giant rocking motion. Our biggest chandelier in the dining room swayed for two to three minutes," Baker said. "The customers were sitting down, they didn't notice much. But anyone of their feet could feel the place rocking like a big boat."

The quake knocked out traffic lights, cracked windows and rattled items off shelves

in stores and homes in the desert community of Westmorland, which has a population of about 1,500.

George Thomas was working in a convenience store in Westmorland when the quake hit. "A couple things fell off shelves and broke," he said. "A window cracked a little bit. Other than that (it was) not too bad."

"They're (customers) coming in, talking about it, but they're not talking about damage," he said. "I'm mostly cleaning up the mess."

Police Chief Robert Taylor said: "The only damage that has been reported is some merchandise falling off shelves — canned goods, (Continued on Page A-5)

### INSIDE TODAY

Business..... C4  
Classified..... D6  
Comics..... C9

Editorials..... A6  
Entertainment..... D3  
Local News..... B1

Readers' Page..... A7  
State..... B7  
Television..... D2

Pinne, Organ, Grandfather Clock  
CHRISTMAS SALE! Shireton Inn,  
Liverpool, Today 10-9 pm — ADV

Lottery Winner: 324  
Win-Four: 8064  
Cash 40: 3,5,8,9,25,39

Win-10: 10, 11, 12, 18, 29, 32  
35, 36, 42, 43, 47, 48, 59  
62, 65, 69, 72, 74, 77, 79