

Grudge Murder

Madison Man Sentenced To Life

BY DIRK LAMMERS
Associated Press

MADISON— From the moment 73-year-old Carl Ericsson rang his old high school classmate's doorbell in January, verified the man's identity and then shot him dead, the question had been what prompted him to confront a man he hadn't even spoken to in years.

The startling answer, a prosecutor said Friday, was a 1950s locker room humiliation that festered in Ericsson's mind for a half-century.

"He said that a jockstrap was put on his head," Kenneth Meyer said. "It's the only thing he's ever mentioned in talking to law enforcement."

Ericsson, who a psychiatrist said suffered from anxiety and depression for years, last month pleaded guilty but mentally ill to second-degree murder in the death of Norman Johnson.

"I guess it was from something that happened over 50 years ago," Ericsson told a judge then. "It was apparently in my subconscious."

He was sentenced Friday to life in prison.

Johnson was a track star at Madison High School, and Ericsson a student sports manager. The prosecutor said he had no other details about the locker room story, which never was corroborated.

"I know of no one that remembers it or acknowledges it other than Carl," Meyer said.

He also declined to say whether in Ericsson's telling, it was Johnson who put the jockstrap on his head.

Beth Ribstein, Johnson's youngest daughter, said she couldn't understand how someone could hold onto a grudge for so long.

"It was just goofing off in a locker room," Ribstein said, shaking her head.

Ribstein, 50, addressed the court before

"I guess it was from something that happened over 50 years ago. It was apparently in my subconscious."

CARL ERICSSON

Ericsson was sentenced, and accused him of envying Johnson's success in the Madison community.

After high school, Johnson played college football, earned a bachelor's and a master's degree and returned to Madison High to teach and coach for more than 30 years.

More than 600 people — about one-sixth of Madison's population — attended Johnson's funeral, including one of Ericsson's family members. Johnson was well-liked and respected across the community, Ribstein said.

"I can't blame you for being jealous of dad," she said to Ericsson.

Ericsson himself was no failure.

He had lived in Wyoming before returning to South Dakota and settling in Watertown, a town nearly an hour north of Madison. He has been married to his wife, Deanna, for more than 44 years, is a North Dakota State University graduate and recently retired from a 25-year insurance career, his attorney, Scott Bratland, has said.

But Ericsson was not well. In an affidavit supporting Ericsson's change of plea, psychiatrist Robert Giebink wrote that Ericsson has a long history of anxiety problems and suffers from "severe and recurrent depression that is, for the most part, treatment resistant." Giebink said Ericsson was significantly depressed and suicidal when they first met in January.

"Thinking was irrational. Judgment was

impaired," Giebink wrote. "He made the comment that he wished each night that he would not wake up in the morning."

Investigators first learned of a potential past incident between the two from Ericsson's brother, Madison attorney Dick Ericsson. Ericsson said in the arrest affidavit that "there was an incident where Norm Johnson did something to Carl."

Dick Ericsson has refused interview requests and declined comment again Friday. No published phone listing could be found Friday for Ericsson's wife.

In brief comments to the judge Friday, Carl Ericsson did not address the grudge but said he would like to tell Johnson's widow, Barb, that he was very sorry for what he had done.

"I just wish I could turn the calendar back," he said.

Ericsson pleaded not guilty to a first-degree murder charge in February and requested a jury trial. But Meyer and Bratland announced May 1 that a deal had been reached. The first-degree murder charge could have carried the death penalty if prosecutors chose to pursue it.

A defendant can be sentenced to the state penitentiary under South Dakota's "guilty but mentally ill" law. Treatment for the mental illness can be given in prison, or the inmate can be transferred to other facilities under the jurisdiction of the Department of Social Services for treatment and then returned to the penitentiary to complete his or her sentence.

Johnson's oldest daughter, 52-year-old Terri Wiblemo, noted in court that Sunday is Father's Day, and each year her dad looked forward to enjoying his favorite meal of fried chicken, potato salad and rhubarb pie.

"We miss my dad very much," she said.

ResCap Objects To Bid From Buffett Firm

BY JOSH FUNK
AP Business Writer

OMAHA, Neb.— Residential Capital is objecting to investor Warren Buffett's offer to buy its mortgage division, but a bankruptcy judge will have the final say.

Residential Capital, which is also known as ResCap, filed a motion opposing a bid from Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway Inc. late Thursday. ResCap's parent company, Ally Financial Inc., filed a separate motion saying it was open to having Berkshire serve as the lead bidder on ResCap's loan portfolio if the court believes the offer is better than Ally's bid.

A hearing on who should be the "stalking horse," or initial bidder, on those assets is scheduled for Monday.

Ally is the former auto lending arm of General Motors. ResCap was hobbled by payments on debt that was taken out to finance soured home mortgages and filed for bankruptcy protection last month.

Residential Capital LLC says it believes Fortress Investment Group LLC is a better choice because its executives met with government officials. Plus, Fortress' Nationstar Mortgage business has an established servicing unit.

ResCap says it invited Berkshire to consider bidding on its assets back in January and Buffett's company declined.

ResCap says Berkshire investment manager Ted Weschler told the company in April that neither filing bankruptcy nor selling ResCap's mortgage platform was in the best interests of stakeholders.

Berkshire officials did not immediately respond to a message

Friday. But earlier this week, Berkshire argued that its offers were better than what ResCap had already received.

Berkshire has said it will match Fortress' \$2.4 billion bid for the mortgage unit, but will offer a lower breakup fee of \$24 million. Fortress' breakup fee is \$72 million if its deal doesn't go through.

Berkshire also said it would forgo any expense reimbursement. Fortress is set to get up to \$10 million in expense reimbursement if it loses the auction for ResCap's assets.

Berkshire hasn't explained why it wants ResCap's assets, but investors who follow the company believe Buffett is probably just looking to buy assets that are selling for less than they are worth.

Berkshire already owns roughly \$2.8 billion in mortgage-backed securities purchased for about \$2.5 billion. It also owns manufactured home builder Clayton Homes, which runs its own lending unit, so it has some experience with mortgages.

Berkshire offered to buy ResCap's loan portfolio, which Ally offered to purchase. Berkshire said it will pay \$1.45 billion for the portfolio, compared with Ally's \$1.4 billion offer. But Ally could pay \$1.6 billion if a deal is made under ResCap's Chapter 11 bankruptcy reorganization plan.

Ally said in its motion that it welcomed Berkshire's bid and a competing one that Lone Star U.S. Acquisitions LLC filed. Ally said the only reason it agreed to bid on ResCap's loan portfolio

was to help it reorganize.

Ally said it was a reluctant bidder on the loans and doesn't necessarily want them.

Ally, which is 74 percent owned by the U.S. government, makes loans to GM and Chrysler customers and finances dealer inventories. The government first bailed out the company, then known as GMAC Inc., in late 2008 as part of the Bush administration's aid to the auto industry. The Obama administration provided additional funding in May and December 2009.

ResCap had been a drain on Ally's finances for years, struggling to make payments on its heavy debt ever since the bottom fell out of the U.S. housing market in 2007.

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Belle Fourche Man Pleads Not Guilty

BELLE FOURCHE (AP) — A 32-year-old Belle Fourche man has pleaded not guilty to kidnapping and assaulting his ex-girlfriend. The *Black Hills Pioneer* reports that Steven Allen McKean pleaded not guilty to charges of first-degree kidnapping, aggravated assault, simple assault, first-degree burglary and intentional damage to property during a Thursday arraignment.

According to an affidavit filed in the case, McKean allegedly entered the home of his ex-girlfriend without her permission and threatened to kill her if she didn't leave with him. McKean reportedly took the woman to Orman Dam before returning to her home, where he was arrested.

McKean is being held at Meade County Jail. His bond is set at \$25,000. The next hearing in the case is set for July 12.

Texas-Based Pipe Maker Expanding To SD

RAPID CITY (AP) — A Texas-based pipe maker hopes to start construction by the end of the summer in Rapid City on what would be its seventh manufacturing plant, employing about 40 people.

WL Plastics director Mike Dahl tells the *Rapid City Journal* that the oil boom in western North Dakota is a factor in the company's efforts to expand into South Dakota. He says the company hopes to have the plant operating early next year.

WL Plastics also has plants in Kentucky, Wyoming, Utah and in the Canadian province of Alberta.

Two Nebraska Hospital Workers Suspended

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Authorities say two staffers have been suspended following a violent incident at Nebraska's psychiatric hospital that prompted a state investigation.

The *Lincoln Journal Star* reports that the investigation and suspensions follow the May 14 incident at the Lincoln Regional Center.nd Human Services

Injured Nebraska Deputy Returns Home

OMAHA (AP) — A Douglas County sheriff's deputy who was injured during a traffic stop in Omaha is out of the hospital.

Deputy David Wintle was injured on Monday when a pickup truck hit his patrol car on Interstate 80. KETV-TV says Friday that Wintle is now recovering at home.

Wintle and the driver of the car he pulled over were standing on the shoulder when the truck slammed into the back of Wintle's cruiser. The patrol car then hit the Wintle.

Wintle says he was thrown into the windshield. He suffered serious knee injuries.

The driver of the pickup was also hospitalized. The driver of the vehicle that Wintle had pulled over and his police dog, who was in the cruiser, weren't seriously hurt..

New Miss SD Being Crowned Next Week

HOT SPRINGS (AP) — Women from around South Dakota will arrive in Hot Springs on Saturday to start four days of rehearsals for the 66th annual Miss South Dakota Pageant.

Organizers say preliminary competitions are set for Wednesday and Thursday, with a new Miss South Dakota being crowned on Saturday, June 23.

Anna Simpson of Rapid City is the reigning Miss South Dakota. She represented the state in the Miss America Pageant in Las Vegas in January, and has spent the year advocating for volunteerism

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