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## Escaped convict stops running

### 'If I get killed, OK . . . I've got to get this over with'



Steve Watson

By R.H. Ring  
The Associated Press

Steve Watson, a convicted armed robber who escaped from Fort Grant Training Center in August, stopped running yesterday and turned himself in to authorities here.

It wasn't an easy decision. Behind prison doors, Watson fears homosexual rage and violent death — the same fates he says he fled last summer.

As a condition of his surrender, Watson insisted that he first talk with a reporter. This is his story.

"I could be killed for talking to you. But I could be killed even if I don't," so it doesn't seem like I have much to lose.

"I don't care anymore. If Arizona wants to lock me up, fine. If I get shanked (killed) or killed, OK. But I'm not going to run any more. You start off good, and you think you can establish yourself, but it catches up to you.

I had a good job where I was (after escaping). I was well liked, respected, making up to \$1,300 a week. Then people who knew me recognized me, and I had to leave.

I've got to get this over with. I can't give up all my life. I've got two years of college that I'd like to finish off. I want to be able to go back home, to Altus, Okla., where my friends and family are, where I made Eagle Scout a long time ago, and where I enlisted in the Navy for two years.

It started when I left Oklahoma on semester break in early 1980. I came through Tucson with Kenny Ford from Altus. We were headed to Las Vegas.

We ended up breaking in to a house here. It was the first crime I ever committed. What was stolen was a 257 gun, a 30.06 rifle and a TV set.

We were cruising up to Vegas, and we stopped at this motel near Kingman less than 24 hours later.

At the motel, I stayed in the room and went to bed. Kenny said something about wanting to rob the place, but I thought he was joking. This is great. He goes to the office, and he pretends to be filling out the registration card. He puts a fictitious name and street, but he writes down Altus, Oklahoma, and the tag number on my car.

Then he robs the place. How ridiculous. I was in bed when it happened. He was 19; I was 22.

At the first day of the trial, he told everybody I had planned it, even though I wasn't there when it happened. He put it all on me. Later on, though, he signed a sworn statement saying I had nothing to do with it. But it was too late. They wouldn't allow it for the appeal because of the plea bargain.

I took a plea for seven years, and I blame my lawyer for that. I saw him twice before the trial. He didn't even come over the day before. I just saw him in court. He charged my parents \$1,000.

I was backed against the wall. I took it all rightly until the plea bargain. I really don't think they had anything on me.

When I get evaluated by the Corrections Department, I scored high, and they sent me down here to the Arizona Corrections Training Facility. I was there about a year, and I had a good record. I took college courses there, and I had a good job as a clerk — maybe 60 cents an hour.

Then I was transferred to Fort Grant, and that's when the trouble started. I was excited at first. I had heard how it was out in a valley. It was an old fort, no fences or anything. Just green grass. It was one step closer to freedom.

I had no knowledge in the way of prisons. Tucson is not a prison. You've got kids' games there — youngsters running around playing these silly games. But Fort Grant.

See DESPITE FORT GRANT'S, Page 1A

## 'Siberian Express' puts new blizzards on Midwestern track

By David L. Langford  
The Associated Press

A surge of polar cold nicknamed the Siberian Express blew into the frozen Midwest with paralyzing blizzards yesterday, and the mercury sank to painful lows deep into the San Belt.

The frigid winds sent the chill factor to 80 degrees below zero in places, and the death toll reached 251 in a wintry assault that began writing weather history last weekend.

"It is one of the most severe outbreaks of cold weather mid-America has seen since the 1890s," said meteorologist Nolan Dake of the National Weather Service in Kansas City.

While temperatures yesterday slipped shy of last weekend's records, such as the record low of 26 below in Chicago, readings were close to 30 degrees below zero across parts of Montana, North Dakota and Minnesota, with wind chills below zero as far south as San Antonio, Texas.

More than 120,000 people remained without power in Alabama, Georgia and North Carolina. Freezing rain closed many highways again in north Georgia, and snow fell in the Texas Panhandle.

Snow was common from the Great Lakes across the Ohio Valley into the Northeast, where New York City got its third snowfall in four days.

A blizzard with winds of 50 mph also closed highways and caused many traffic accidents across central and northern Indiana, Ohio and southern Michigan, where 11 inches of snow fell at Frankfort.

Blowing snow was causing headaches for the Ohio Department of Transportation, which was trying to keep open the state's 19,000 miles of highways.

"We can plow a highway, and 15 minutes later it'll be the same condition it was," said David V. Finley, a department spokesman.

Freezing temperatures and snowstorms made Ohio highway maintenance nearly impossible, and authorities asked people to stay off the roads. Seventeen motorists were treated for minor injuries after a 25-car pileup on Cleveland's Shoreway, which runs along Lake Erie.

Blowing snow also shut off many highways in South Dakota, where the mercury dropped to 24 below at Rapid City, Mandak, Aberdeen and Milbank.

In South Bend, Ind., snowplows that tried to open the streets were called back by muddiness, and officials said they would not try again until 24 hours after the snow had died down.

Michigan officials declared a state of emergency in Charlevoix and urged everyone to stay off the roads. "The back roads are completely closed," said Earl Muma, the county's emergency-services director. "The main trunk lines are completely closed."

"The snow is coming down in buckets," said Robert Sullivan, a dispatcher at the Benzie County sheriff's office.

Wind gusts of 30 mph with the temperature at 18 below zero made the wind-chill factor 74 below in Rockford, Ill. Chicago reported a wind chill of 67 below.

icy roads caused a pileup of 20 to 30 cars

See SIBERIAN-STYLE, Page 1A



Charlie Buchanan makes his home in cardboard boxes on New York City's famed Park Avenue

## Box people find crate way of life

By Scott Kraft and Nancy Shuims  
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — They look like something the winter wind stole from the trash-strewn cardboard boxes hugging the wall of a Park Avenue bank in the frigid darkness. But they are homeless.

They are homes for the box people.

Boxes are homes for Mary, Frank and Charlie, who survived last week when record-breaking cold killed more than 200 Americans. And boxes are where they'll try to survive bitter cold again this week.

"It's all in your mind, really, the cold," says Charlie Buchanan, 48, a gaunt, toothless, grizzled man who seems oblivious to the stinging sleet that pelts his face as he peers from his box.

One night last week during the worst of it, when the air felt like ice, and half a foot of snow sent thousands of shivering New Yorkers home early, many of the city's 36,000 homeless sought refuge in city shelters.

But there are only 400 beds for the destitute homeless in this city. So some street people look all-night subway naps. Others sleep in Grand Central Station or the Port Authority bus terminal.

Charlie, Mary Byrd, and Frank James went home to a cluster of IBM cartons, covered with mailing labels and stamped "Handle With Care."

The temperature was in the teens. But the sturdy cardboard boxes are "warm

See PEOPLE ARE, Page 5A

## Charges, countercharges fly in LaGrand brother's release

By D. Weyermann  
The Associated Press

Walter LaGrand, 19, was serving a prison sentence for attempted armed robbery when he was granted parole last August. But nearly two months later, the parole still was not final.

That is why the Department of Corrections says it could do nothing to keep him in jail. That is why the department insists the whole fault for letting him out of jail rests with Pima County officials.

Corrections Department representatives gave that explanation to reporters trying to

LaGrand's befuddling trip through the criminal justice system, and its tragic consequences, is like an ugly war on the system that nobody seems to want to look at, let alone claim responsibility for.

Rep. Pete Dunn, R-Phoenix, who has worked on many of the criminal laws applied to the LaGrands, thinks the war may now be burned off.

"The LaGrand case represents everything that is wrong with the criminal justice system," Dunn said Friday. He suggested the agencies are now involved in a "cover-up" of the facts.

See AGENCIES, Page 8A

Marana and Avra Valley residents meet to organize a community watch program. Page 4B.

fact not why Walter LaGrand had been released from jail on Jan. 6, less than 24 hours before he and his brother allegedly bound and stabbed to death Marana bank manager Kenneth J. Hartsock, 61, and seriously wounded Dawn Lopez, 30, a teller.

When reported to Pima County officials, the explanation prompted some laughter — and some completely different explanations.

### Weather

**Walking weather.** Today will be mostly sunny with increasing high clouds. A high around 73 is predicted, and a low of 41. Yesterday's high and low were 60 and 34.

Yesterday's national temperature extremes were 34 below zero at Havre, Mont., and 92 at Brownsville, Texas. Details on Page 4A.

### News

**Pets do their share.** More than 200 cats and dogs are being treated in a program to test the effectiveness of new treatments in combating cancer. Page 1B.

**Prize-winning journalists.** Two reporters stop off for a beer, then race off with a \$10,000 winning ticket in the Arizona State Lottery. Page 1B.

**Capping gas tax at 5 cents.** Gov. Bruce Babbitt and lawmakers seem to be forming an agreement to get a modest limit on gasoline tax increases. Page 1B.

**Curbing drunken drivers.** Rep. Pat Wright, R-Glendale, wants a tighter law on penalties for DWI offenders. Page 6B.

**University alternative.** State legislators are preparing a bill calling for expanded vocational-education programs in Arizona. Page 6B.

**Locking down crime.** Slayings get the headlines, but there's more to the story of crime in Pima County. Page 7B.

**Censorship battle.** Attracting what it calls violations of the First Amendment, an Arizona group vows to fight censorship of reading material in schools. Page 1F.

**Leader of the pack.** New Hampshire leads the nation in cigarette sales at 254 packs sold in a year for every man, woman and child. Arizona is below the average at 113.8. Page 3A.

**Guarded optimism.** Secretary of State Alexander Haig returns from the Mideast encouraged that Palestinian autonomy talks are progressing. Page 1A.

### Money

**It's a mystery.** The strike has ended, but the reasons for Mexico's multistate truckers' strike are baffling. Page 1E.

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Search for bodies — Divers pause in search for bodies aboard the plane that crashed Wednesday into the Potomac River. Story, Page 2A.