



Shorthorn: Alan Crabtree

TEQUILA SUNSET — Show me the way to go home. I know the dorm's around here somewhere. Now if I can just crawl over that curb on Cooper St., and if nobody steps on my

hands, I've got it made. What's that up ahead? A flock of UFOs hovering in the twilight zone? I swear I'm going on the wagon tomorrow if I can just make it through tonight.

Parents of retarded seek professional investigation

AUSTIN (AP) — The mother of a severely retarded young man said Thursday it will take professionals outside the state system to restore "human dignity" to residents of Texas' mental institutions.

Gene Karaffa of Waco told the House General Investigating Committee she received the "sickening, frightening news" May 4, 1976, that her son had been the victim of homosexual abuse at the Mexia State School.

Mrs. Karaffa, past president of the Texas Association for Retarded Citizens, said she was later informed that her son probably had been abused again and it may have happened a third time.

She said she and her husband visited the school every 10 days and had yet to find a dormitory fully staffed.

She said her son — who can speak only three words — had walked to school in shirtsleeves in 38-degree weather.

To illustrate what she said was poor planning at the school, Mrs. Karaffa said her son gets his "weekly treat," a hamburger and soft drink, at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday.

She said she refused to let her son take part in weekend recreation after another mental patient fell off a ferris wheel and, according to the patient's mother, "broke nearly every bone in his body."

The only way to restore "human dignity" and "take away the degradation," she said, is through outside professional help.

Jackie Youngblood of Austin said her son, a resident at the Travis State School here, had lost two teeth and suffered a broken arm and finger "smashed beyond recognition."

No one could tell her, she said, how the injuries occurred.

"There are three things I know," she said. "There are not enough (staff

people. They don't get paid enough, and they (administrators) need two witnesses to an abuse case" to do anything about it.

Asked if she had any evidence that her son's injuries resulted from wilfull or intentional abuse, Mrs. Youngblood replied, "No, sir."

The executive director of the association for retarded citizens said in testimony prepared for the committee — but which he omitted — that he and others had heard rumors that the committee is not serious about uncovering abuses in state schools.

Dr. Jack Blackstone said he cannot believe the rumor.

Blackstone stayed with his prepared testimony, however, that some parents of patients were afraid to testify "for fear of reprisal against their child." Staff members are afraid to testify, he said, because they think they may lose their jobs.