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# Deeb trial to be heard in Cleburne

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Muneer Mohammad Deeb, who prosecutors say initiated the bungled murder-for-hire plot that led to the July 1982 deaths of three teenagers, will stand trial in Cleburne beginning in late January.

Judge

George Allen of Waco's 54th State District Court said Monday that 279th State District Judge John R. MacLean has agreed to accept Deeb's case and tentatively has scheduled it for the third or

fourth week in January.

Allen granted change of venue motions in September from Deeb and co-defendant Gilbert Melendez, after attorneys for the Lake Waco triple homicide suspects convinced him that their clients could not receive a fair trial in McLennan County.

Deeb, 25, and Melendez, 29, each are charged with three counts of capital murder in the stabbing deaths of Jill Montgomery, Raylene Rice and Kenneth Franks.

Deeb will face charges in Johnson County only in Miss Montgomery's death.

A Waco jury convicted David Wayne Spence of capital murder in Miss Montgomery's death in July and recommended that he be

put to death for his involvement in the triple homicide case. Spence, 26, was taken to Death Row at the Texas Department of Corrections' Ellis Unit No. 1 last Thursday.

Deeb, the former co-owner of a Waco grocery store, was implicated as the instigator of the murder-for-hire plan during the early stages of Spence's trial. Three witnesses told jurors that they were present when Deeb purchased a life insurance policy on a former Methodist Home resident and made himself the beneficiary.

One of those witnesses, Deeb's business partner, testified that he overheard Deeb ask Spence if he knew someone who could kill Gayle Kelly, the woman for whom Deeb had purchased the policy.

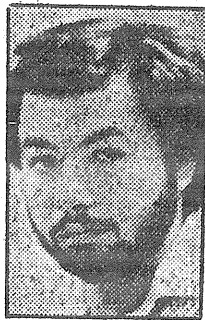
Prosecutors contend that Miss Montgomery, who resembled Miss Kelly, was the victim of mistaken identity on the night that she and the other teens were killed.

McLennan County District Attorney Vic Feazell said Monday that he is satisfied that Deeb's trial will be held in Cleburne.

"I am real pleased that it was Cleburne," Feazell said. "From what I know of it, Cleburne is a law-abiding, conservative community."

Allen said he contacted judges in Corsicana, Bryan, Georgetown, Forth Worth and Dallas seeking a location for the trial before MacLean consented to hear the case.

Deeb is represented by court-appointed attorneys Dick McCall and Jack Holcomb.



Deeb