

Okla. man found not guilty in conspiracy trial

An Oklahoma man was found not guilty Wednesday in U.S. District Court on conspiracy charges in connection with the November 1988 theft of seven horses and saddles from a boys ranch.

The defendant, **Rex Treadwell**, 20, of Gore, Okla. was charged with conspiracy to commit transportation of stolen goods. He was facing a maximum sentence of five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine.

The theft occurred at the Oklahoma Methodist Boys Ranch near Gore on Nov. 27, 1988. Authorities later recovered the horses in Allen, Beauregard, Grant and Vernon Parishes.

His trial began on Monday with the jury hearing closing arguments Wednesday. The jury began their deliberations at about 11:30 a.m. and returned the verdict shortly after 2:30 p.m.

The jurors did not ask to see any of the evidence filed in the record during their deliberations.

After the not guilty verdict was handed down, Federal Judge Earl Veron is said to have told the jurors that their decision was the most serious "miscarriage of justice" he had ever

seen in his 22 years as a judge.

He added that there had been more than enough ample evidence submitted by the prosecution during the trial to show **Treadwell** was guilty of the offense he was charged with.

Defense attorney Glen Vamvoras of Lake Charles said Wednesday that **Treadwell's** father and uncle testified in the trial that the defendant was at home the night the theft occurred.

He returned to his home at about 11:30 p.m. after a date and later got up at about 5 a.m. to go deer hunting, according to the testimony. Both witnesses stated **Treadwell** did not leave the house.

The theft is said to have occurred sometime after 1 a.m. A ranch official testified that several fences were cut and a truck was brought in to take the horses away.

Jurors heard conflicting testimony from prosecution witnesses who have admitted their parts in the horse theft and now face jail sentences. These co-conspirators stated that **Treadwell** was involved in the theft.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Larry Regan, the prosecutor, said he had no comment on the not guilty verdict.