

'Demon' slayer paroled

BROOKFIELD (UPI) — Arne Cheyenne Johnson, who claimed he was possessed by a demon when he killed his girlfriend's employer, has been freed after five years as a model prisoner, parole officials said Wednesday.

Johnson, 24, was "an exemplary prisoner" at the state's maximum security prison at Somers and was released Jan. 17, well in advance of his official parole date of Feb. 26, a spokesman said.

"I can comfortably say a complete psychiatric work-up has been done. His mental condition was carefully examined. They found no negative factors," said Hans Fjellman, chief of parole for the state Department of Correction.

The case drew national attention when Johnson's attorney, Martin J. Minnella of Waterbury, declared he would claim demonic possession as a defense for his client.

Minnella's attempt to establish demonism as a defense placed the case in the national media and was the subject of a televised docu-drama, starring Andy Griffith and Cloris Leachman.

Johnson was a Brookfield resident when tried in 1981 for the stabbing death of Alan Bono after a day of drinking with the victim and Johnson's girlfriend.

Bono, 40, was the employer of Johnson's girlfriend, Deborah Glatzer, whom Johnson married Jan. 31, 1985, in a ceremony at the Somers prison.

Johnson testified he became possessed by a demon during an exorcism of Glatzer's younger brother, David, 12, a year earlier.

Johnson said at least four demons fled from the child and at least one entered him instead.

The prosecution accused Johnson of going into a rage and stabbing Bono after the victim made obscene gestures toward Glatzer after an afternoon of drinking on Feb. 16, 1981.

Danbury Superior Court Judge Robert J. Callahan refused from the start of the trial to allow Minnella to pursue the "demon defense," and a jury eventually convicted Johnson of manslaughter.

He was sentenced to a 10-to-20 year jail term.

While in prison, Johnson obtained a high school degree and completed both technical and college courses, "receiving very good grades," Fjellman said.

Johnson's parole officer is based in Bridgeport, but correction officials would not say where Johnson plans to live or what he will do. The parole board has ordered Johnson have no contact with the victim's family.

Fjellman said Johnson is living with his wife, "not in a half-way house," and has received at least one job offer.