

Attack victim's death could lead to murder charges



NATIONAL
senseless with chains and boots were convicted long ago and did their time. For Danny Centrone and his parents, the sentence was life.

On Nov. 6, more than two decades after the attack by motorcycle gang members left him brain-damaged, Centrone died choking on a steak sandwich. He was 38.

The medical examiner's office may declare the death murder and a prosecutor could decide once again to charge the three onetime Warlocks gang members in the 1972 beating.

"The worst part of this is the victim served a worse sentence than the perpetrators," said Greta Centrone, Danny's mother. "They served their sentences, lived their lives. But Danny just went on and on."

Delaware County Medical Examiner Dimitri Contostavlos expects to rule on the case before year's end.

"Physically there's no question: He had an impaired ability for eating and a tendency to choke that stemmed directly from his assault," Contostavlos said. "My gut instinct is to certify it as a

F O L - CROFT, Pa. (AP) — The three men who bashed a teenager

homicide."

Such a ruling could prompt District Attorney William H. Ryan Jr. to reopen the case, though the prosecutor said he's never known another like it.

Danny Centrone was 17, a basketball player and an aspiring carpenter when his life took its terrible turn the night of July 19, 1972.

Centrone was hanging out with friends in a shopping center parking lot in this workingclass Philadelphia suburb. Some Warlocks drove up and fanned out, demanding revenge from the youth who had beaten one of their members.

It wasn't Danny. They chose him anyway.

"His only mistake was not running fast enough," said Danny's sister Christine, 24.

The beating left Danny with a fractured skull, damaged organs, a back full of stab wounds and a devastated brain.

Danny lay comatose for 19 days. When he emerged, he couldn't talk. Then came therapy, retraining, frustration. Finally he went home.

"The boy that everybody knew as Danny Centrone wasn't there anymore," said Theodore Pastore, the investigating officer and now police chief of the community of 7,200.

Danny regained some speech,

but it was slurred and labored. He had little muscle control, and his short-term memory was nearly gone. When he became angry and unable to find the words, he'd punch fist into palm.

"He was a prisoner in his own body. Everything he learned in high school he remembered. But his body wouldn't respond," his mother said. "He was 17 forever. He just stopped."

William Franchi, Robert McCabe and Augustus Wayne Lochman were convicted in the beating and sentenced to seven to 14 years. Franchi and McCabe are now 41 and served about 14 and 13 years, respectively. Lochman, who protested his innocence during his six-and-a-half years in prison, is 42.

Today, Franchi is in federal prison on an unrelated drug conviction. Attempts to reach

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Danny's Mother

McCabe and Lochman were unsuccessful; telephone books do not list their names.

After the attack, Danny's parents struggled to care for a boy lost on the verge of manhood who suddenly needed constant supervision.

Thinking of what might have been was hard on his father, Joseph Centrone, a construction worker.

"For me to go out and watch boys Danny's age grow up, see them with a wife and a kid, see

them on the job ... I had such plans for Danny," Centrone said. Danny stayed home with his parents for 19 years until he began to deteriorate. In 1991, they placed him in a nursing home. He died during a weekend visit home.

While Centrone wants his son's attackers tried for murder, his wife is less sure.

"The hatred's gone. The bitterness is gone," Mrs. Centrone said. "And they're still horrible. That's their punishment."

Man barely wins lottery

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — He's no ordinary Joe, even though he wants to be.

Joseph T. Jones Jr., who came within two days of missing the deadline to claim a \$20.8 million lottery jackpot, was declared the winner Monday of the Nov. 20, 1992, drawing.

Jones, a 42-year-old salesman and father of three, bought the ticket the day of the Pennsylvania Wild Card Lotto drawing for the third-largest prize in the game's history.

He put the ticket in a box with others he thought were losers and didn't realize he had won for nearly a year.

After hearing that no winner had come forward, he went through the old tickets and found the winner. He turned it

in Nov. 20.

Winning tickets expire after one year. Because Nov. 20 fell on a Saturday this year, his ticket would have expired Nov. 22.

Jones, who will receive \$715,364 a year after taxes for 21 years, says the riches won't go to his head.

"I'm a very practical person," he said. "I'd just like to be Allentown Joe."

Jones, who lives in Slatington, near Allentown, said he wants to work fewer hours but will keep his job with Smead-Hasting Co., a Minnesota-based office supply manufacturer.

"You can only drink so much and golf so much," Jones said. "You have to keep your mind occupied and busy."

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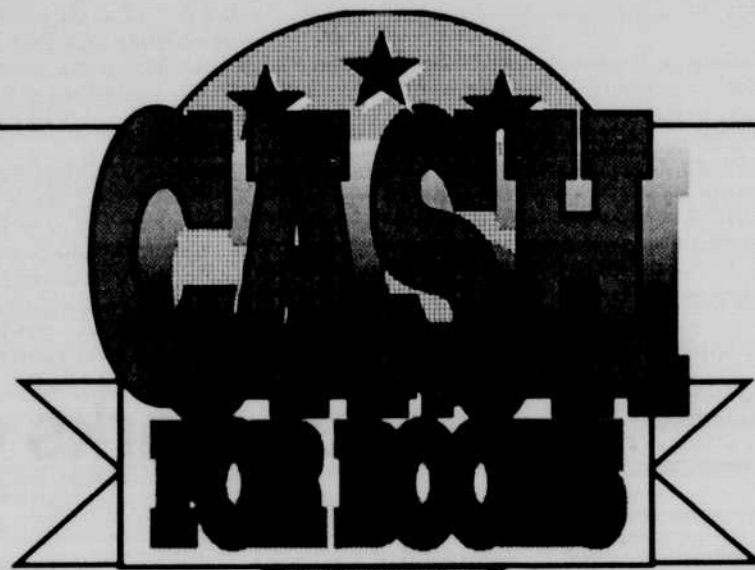
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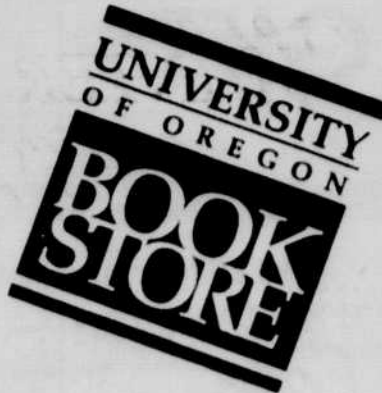
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