

# Police say sniper left phone number

Peter Nicholas, Sumana Chatterjee and Tim Johnson  
Knight Ridder Newspapers (KRT)

ASHLAND, Va. — In a startling and unusual turn of events, authorities said Sunday night that a sniper striking terror in the Washington area planted a secret message for police near a steakhouse where he shot a 37-year-old man, critically wounding him.

The nature of the killer's message remained a mystery, and a subsequent statement by police indicated a cryptic dialogue may be occurring between law enforcement officials and the sniper, who has killed nine people and wounded three others since Oct. 2.

Police Chief Charles Moose of Montgomery County, Md., who heads a regional task force hunting the sniper, exhorted the media "to carry this statement, carry it clearly and carry it often."

Then Moose said: "To the person who left us a message at the Ponderosa last night, you gave us a telephone

number. We do want to talk to you. Call us at the number you provided."

Moose answered no questions, and a spokeswoman, Joyce Utter, did not explain what Moose meant by the perplexing statement, only that the message bore a communication that police wanted conveyed to the sniper.

"This should make sense to the person who left the message," Utter said.

Once before, in a wooded area near a school where the sniper wounded a 13-year-old on Oct. 7, police found a Tarot card with a statement from the sniper, pronouncing "I am God" and apparently including another message for police.

Moose's statement confirmed that the man shot in the stomach Saturday night outside a steakhouse about 90 miles south of Washington was the latest victim of the sniper.

The victim, who was not identified, was shot as he and his wife walked out of a Ponderosa restaurant in Ashland, along Interstate 95, a major north-south artery on the East Coast. His

wife was not injured. The couple was traveling through the area and had stopped for food and gasoline.

The shooting marked the first time that the assailant has hit on a weekend and the farthest the attacks have occurred from the nation's capital. Saturday's attack broke a lull of five days since a fatal shooting in Falls Church, Va., a Washington suburb, and intensified the fear that has plagued Washington, Maryland and northern Virginia since Oct. 2.

The attack also brought new urgency to a hunt for a furtive killer who has struck victims of a variety of ages, genders and ethnic groups. The sniper has kept area schools in lock-down mode with children unable to play outside, and it has forced many residents indoors, afraid even to pump gas.

Police said the gunman appeared to have fired from a distance, concealing his position in a wooded area behind the Ponderosa restaurant's rear parking lot. The distance from the woods to the spot where the vic-

tim fell was about 57 yards.

The attacker also fired a single bullet, and had his choice of highway escape routes, as has been the pattern. The restaurant sits within a half mile of Interstate 95 and is only a few blocks from Route 1, another major north-south artery. Police said roadblocks went up within 10 minutes of the emergency call notifying them of the shooting.

The latest attack unfolded with a grim familiarity. As in earlier shootings, police helicopters hovered over the crime scene, training spotlights below. Bloodhounds sniffed for clues. Up to 100 officers swept in and canvassed the parking lot behind the restaurant, walking shoulder-to-shoulder in a late-night search for shell casings and hints of the sniper's presence. The search began again after dawn Sunday.

Sheriff Stuart Cook of the Hanover County sheriff's department declined to discuss what evidence, if any, was found at the scene. Chief Moose point-

edly praised Cook's role in the investigation Sunday evening statement but did not detail what crucial information the Hanover sheriff provided.

The victim was in critical condition at the Medical College of Virginia Hospital in Richmond, 15 miles to the south. Surgeons operated on him Saturday for three hours.

"The prognosis is still guarded. But since he is a very healthy man and he is very young, the chances are fair to good," said Dr. Rao Ivatury, director of trauma and critical care.

Surgeons mended the man's stomach and repaired damage to his kidney and pancreas.

They also removed the man's spleen, Ivatury said, but did not remove the bullet or bullet fragments.

Unless surgeons obtain the bullet, authorities will not be able to determine if it was fired from the same .22-caliber rifle used in the 11 other shootings, nine of which have been fatal.

© 2002, Knight Ridder/Tribune Information Services.

# Nevada voters set to decide reefer referendum

Bob Keefe  
Cox News Service

LAS VEGAS — Smoking tobacco in public places may be illegal in other states, but you can light up just about anywhere in Nevada.

Need a drink? They're free in most casinos, as long as you gamble.

Las Vegas Boulevard — the aptly named Strip — is crowded with hawkers handing out pictures of naked women who will come to your hotel room for a private strip tease or something more. Prostitution is legal in most parts of Nevada, and even in Las Vegas it is winked at.

And soon, you may be able to do something else in Nevada that you can't do in any other state without a

prescription: legally smoke marijuana.

If Nevada voters approve, it would no longer be a crime for anyone 21 or older to possess up to 3 ounces of pot — enough for between 150 and 250 marijuana cigarettes — within the state's borders.

The reefer referendum has a long way to go before proponents can legally fire up a joint. Even if it passes Nov. 5 — early voting started Saturday — under Nevada law it must be approved again in 2004.

So far, polls show voters split evenly on the idea.

Proponents say legalizing pot would free police to work on more serious crimes like rape or murder. Opponents, led by law enforcement agen-

cies, say making another mind-altering drug legal would lead to other crimes, from dangerous driving to sexual assaults to the use of harder drugs.

"I can't imagine how we can throw another illicit drug into the mix and people can believe in any way, shape or form that it would be a good thing," said Sgt. Rick Barela, spokesman for the Las Vegas Metro Police and a cop for more than 20 years.

Nonetheless, advocates' claims that smoking pot is a good thing for medicinal purposes — cancer and AIDS treatment among them — have put marijuana laws under pressure nationwide, particularly in the West.

Eight states have already legalized marijuana for medicinal purposes.

All but one, Maine, is in the West. Along with Nevada, the others are Colorado, California, Washington, Oregon, Hawaii and Alaska.

In Arizona, voters will decide Nov. 5 whether to reduce the penalties for possessing small amounts of marijuana from a felony with possible jail time to a \$250 civil fine. That referendum will also ask voters whether Arizona should establish a state-run system to distribute free marijuana for medicinal use.

In Ohio, voters will consider a referendum in November that could allow people arrested for marijuana or other drugs to opt for state-funded drug treatment instead of incarceration.

But for pot advocates, the Nevada

initiative would be the big score. If it passes, proponents say, look for other states to follow.

"Literally, you're going to have tens of thousands of people who are currently illegally using marijuana who will suddenly be legally using it," said Rob Kampa, executive director of the Marijuana Policy Project, a Washington, D.C. group behind the Nevada measure.

The group is working on getting similar ballot initiatives elsewhere, and was behind referendum efforts that failed in Florida and Washington, D.C. "Hopefully it sends a message to other states loud and clear: The people of one state at least are fed up with marijuana laws today," Kampa said.

# Saddam Hussein opens jails, grants amnesty to criminals

Larry Kaplow  
Cox News Service

BAGHDAD, Iraq — President Saddam Hussein threw open Iraq's jail doors Sunday in an amnesty that brought jubilant bedlam to the dusty courtyards of its notorious prisons.

Family members crushed into drab, fetid prison yards for tearful reunions with tens of thousands of criminals, political dissidents and army deserters.

**"I'm in shock.  
I don't know anything  
about my future."**

**Faiq Abdel-Rahman  
Released prisoner**

U.S. officials dismissed the move as an attempt by Hussein to rally domestic and international support in the face of a mounting American-led war threat. It was also seen as an overture by Hussein to opponents of his regime who are living in exile outside Iraq since they, too, were given amnesty.

Minister of Information Mohammed Sahafa read a televised statement from Hussein stating that Iraqis were being given amnesty for "all crimes no matter what the kind."

The amnesty was said to be Hussein's expression of thanks to his fellow citizens for re-electing him last week with 100 percent approval in a referendum.

The amnesty for those in exile could appeal to thousands of Iraqis living in the United States, Europe and, perhaps most significantly, in

Kurdish autonomous areas of northern Iraq where the United States might seek to base an attack on the Iraqi regime.

Among those released were many Shiite Muslim men who had been accused of opposing Hussein's regime, which is dominated by Sunni Muslims. Although Shiites comprise slightly more than half of Iraq's population, they do not have the political influence of Sunnis.

Prisoners, many appearing healthy but dazed or tired, strode through prison gates with their bedding, clothes and toiletries in sacks or metal lock-boxes.

"I'm in shock," 44-year-old Faiq Abdel-Rahman said Sunday night after spending 13 years in Abu Ghraib, a prison about 20 miles outside Baghdad that is infamous for torture and executions. A Kurd from northern Iraq, he was charged with espionage after his merchant brother traveled to Iran.

"I don't know anything about my future, what I will do," he said, adding that he did not know his family's telephone number.

The government made a huge media event of the release, inviting foreign reporters to the jails that have been scenes of mass executions and torture.

Iraqi television ran video shot from a helicopter showing prisoners dancing with joy and chanting praise for Hussein.

Secretary of State Colin Powell, speaking on ABC's "This Week," said the amnesty was a cynical ploy by Hussein.

"This is typical of this man's use of human beings for these political purposes of his," Powell said. "This is the kind of manipulation he uses to try

to paint himself as something other than what he is, a brutal dictator."

"There is a threat of war," said A.K. Hashimi, an advisor to the Iraqi president. "It is a good idea to give every Iraqi a chance to do his work ... all the families are happy to get their people back."

## PHOTO SPECIALS

OCTOBER 21-27

PRINTS FROM SLIDES:

- 3 x 5 - 2 for \$1.00
- 4 x 6 - 2 for \$1.50
- 5 x 7 - \$1.50 each
- 8 x 10 - \$4.00 each

From 35mm color slides, glossy surface only. Allow 5-7 working days for 3x5 and 4x6 prints, and 5-10 days for 5x7 and 8x10 prints.

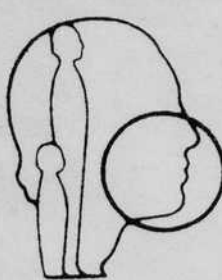
FUJICOLOR PROCESSING INC.

UNIVERSITY of OREGON BOOKSTORE  
www.uobookstore.com



Authentic Chinese Cuisine  
**RESTAURANT & LOUNGE**  
947 Franklin Blvd.

343-4480



**ORTHODONTICS**  
PAUL SAARINEN, D.M.D., M.S., P.C.

*"Complimentary  
Initial Exam"*  
**GO DUCKS!**

485-4466

1814 COBURG RD. • EUGENE  
110 S. 59TH STREET • SPRINGFIELD



Auto Pros Inc.

LOCALLY OWNED

LUBE, OIL, FILTER, TIRE ROTATION

- Chassis Lube • New Oil Filter • Up to 5 Qts. 10W-30 Chevron Oil
- Clean Front Window • Vacuum Front Floor Boards

\$19<sup>99</sup>

• No Appointment necessary  
• Most cars & light trucks  
• 3/4 or 1-ton & Extra Cab Trucks Additional

**Chevron**  
MOTOR OIL  
POWER BY THE PROTECTION

DOWNTOWN 1320 Willamette • 485-2356  
2975 West 11th 344-0007 • OPEN Sundays 11-4