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& Leadership

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**Sunday Services**  
10:00 a.m.

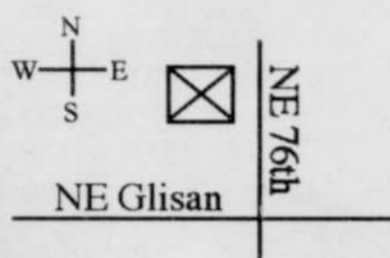
**Bible  
Interpretation  
Study**  
9:00 a.m.



Rev. Casey Chaney  
Rev. Berdell Moffett  
Licensed & Ordained

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PORTLAND!!**

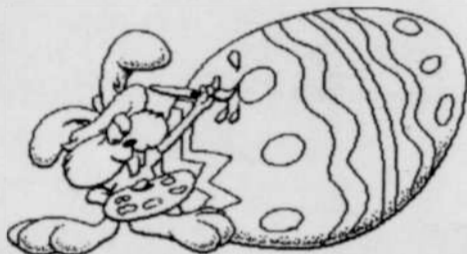
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**EASTER SUNDAY**

10:00 a.m.

"No Other Way But Up"

Rev. Casey Chaney

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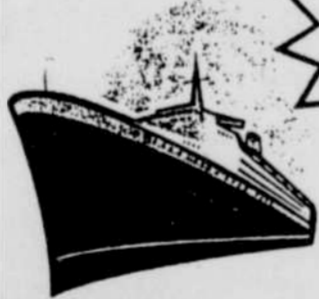
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# HATE STRIKES AGAIN

Two young men have confessed to a murder based on anti-gay bias, making national headlines

By all accounts Billy Jack Gaither was a quiet, gentle man, a loyal friend, a good employee, a regular Bible reader, and a loving son who lived with and cared for his mother and disabled father. He also happened to be gay. And that, according to several media sources, led to his death.

Not many people knew that 39-year-old Gaither was gay. He kept that part of his life to himself, driving from his home in Sylacauga, Ala., to Atlanta if he wanted to go to a gay bar.

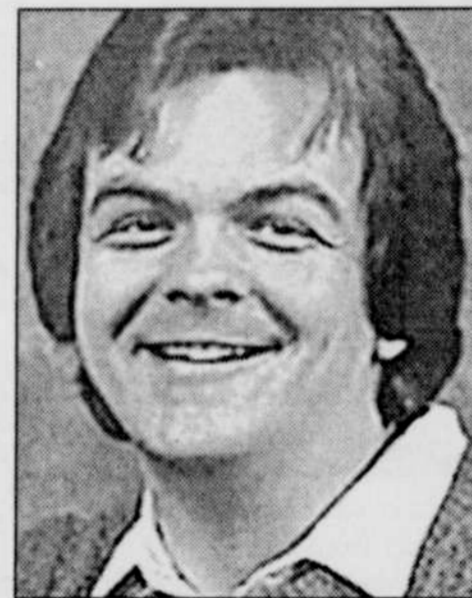
Two men who did know of Gaither's sexual orientation were casual acquaintances from nearby Fayetteville, Ala. On the night of Feb. 19 Steven Eric Mullins, 25, and Charles Monroe Butler, 21, lured Gaither from a local bar, beat him with an ax handle and threw him in the trunk of his own car. They then drove the car to a secluded site on the banks of Pecker-

\$500,000. They have been charged with simple murder, which carries a maximum sentence of life imprisonment. According to authorities, a grand jury could indict the two men on capital charges based on evidence of premeditation, conspiracy and kidnapping. If that happens, the duo could face the death penalty.

Gaither's friends reportedly don't believe the suspects' claim that Gaither made a sexual advance toward the men.

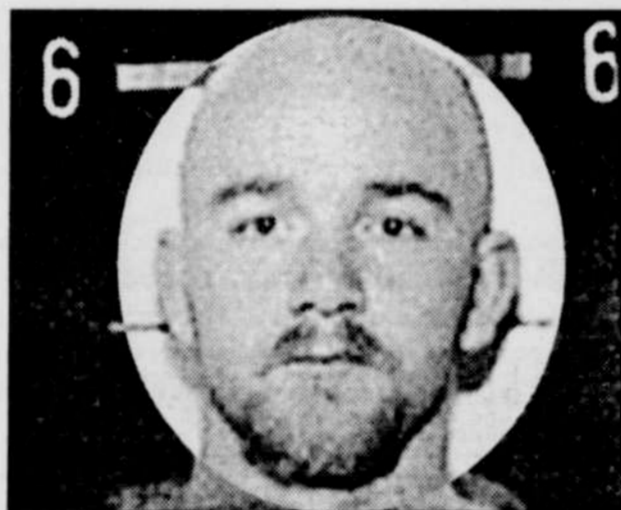
"He didn't ever put anybody in [an awkward] position. A lot of people didn't know he was gay. I danced with him all the time," says Marian Hammond, owner of The Tavern, a bar frequented by Gaither and the one he visited the night of his death.

Gaither commuted each day to his job at Russell Corporation's distribution center in Alexander City, Ala. He was a well-respected employee. He handled all his regular duties and, when needed, filled in for the supervisor.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF CNN

Above: Billy Jack Gaither; below: suspects Steven Eric Mullins (left) and Charles Monroe Butler



wood Creek. Once there, Mullins and Butler beat Gaither to death with the ax handle. They tossed his body on a flaming pyre of kerosene-soaked tires and left. The next day Gaither's burned-out car was found on a country road.

Mullins and Butler have confessed to the murder. They claim Gaither made a sexual pass at one of them. Angered and upset by that alleged action, the two men spent two weeks plotting the murder.

"Mullins and Butler stated the reason they killed him was because he was a homosexual," says Coosa County sheriff's deputy Al Bradley. "We believe this to be the true motive."

Both suspects are being held in the Coosa County jail. Bond for each has been set at

"He was an outstanding employee," says Russell spokesperson Nancy Young. "He was one of those people who had a good attitude. The folks that worked with him were distraught about his death and now more so with the stories that have come out since his death."

Alabama's hate crimes law does not include sexual orientation. A proposal to include orientation has been filed by state Rep. Alvin Holmes, a Democrat from Montgomery.

"This is not the type of place where this happens," says George Carlton, president of the Sylacauga City Council. "Just because you don't like someone, you don't beat them to death."

## ARIZONA

The Arizona attorney general's office has ruled that an all-women recreational vehicle resort violated fair-housing laws.

In a conciliation agreement reached between Pueblo RV Resort and the attorney general's office, the resort agreed to open its facilities to men and allow surprise inspections to ensure compliance, reports the Mar. 5 issue of *The Arizona Republic*.

This all came about because of a complaint filed in 1996 by a former resident, Debra

Collins. Her complaint alleged that Pueblo RV Resort was a lesbian enclave and that resort managers made it hard for her to sell her lot.

The gated resort first became a destination for an all-women's RV club five years ago. Its 228 spaces are individually owned. One of them is currently owned by a man.

According to Joan Montana, resort manager, Pueblo RV Resort has never discriminated. She states that residents have sold their lots without regard to race, gender, religion, family status or handicap.