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NATIONAL news



Gregory Maleszyk claims San Antonio Park Rangers scraped his face against the concrete July 12

TEXAS
 The FBI has begun a probe into serious allegations of unlawful harassment and physical abuse committed by San Antonio Park Rangers who allegedly referred to a group of Canadian friends as "faggots" while they were beaten. Joey Abbruzzese, 20; Derick Anbradi, 21; and Gregory Maleszyk, 19, were leaving a bar on the night of July 12 in the city's famous River Walk.

Abbruzzese stumbled on the way out and was caught by Maleszyk, making the heterosexual friends appear gay to the officers, according to the *Texas Triangle*, a gay newspaper in San Antonio. The article reports the Rangers then put the men through a traumatic episode of extreme physical and verbal abuse, using anti-gay slurs during repeated beatings.

"When the cop saw the Ontario license, he looked to the other three officers present and said he had 'two Canadian faggots,'" Abbruzzese told the *Triangle*. "The officer then asked, 'What are you fags doing in our city?'"

Abbruzzese and Maleszyk were taken to Bexar County Jail, where they claim they were not read their rights under the Miranda rule. The next day, the two men were charged with resisting arrest and were given no reason why they were arrested in the first place. Under the Miranda rule, law enforcement officials must warn people taken into custody that they have the right to remain silent and are entitled to legal counsel.

This run-in did not surprise local activists who long have maintained that the Rangers target gay men for harassment. After 500 arrests and the city's acknowledgment of an active undercover program aimed at homosexuals, the Gay and Lesbian Community Center of San Antonio issued a travel warning in December 1999.

TENNESSEE
 In a crime apparently caused in large part by anti-gay bias, Willie Houston was fatally shot in Nashville after the alleged gunman, 25-year-old Lewis Maynard Davidson III, taunted him with epithets. The 38-year-old just had finished a midnight riverboat cruise with his fiancée, Nedra Jones, and friends when the trouble started.

Houston escorted a blind man by the arm into a restroom while holding Jones' purse. Inside the restroom, the gunman allegedly hurled anti-gay insults at the friends.

Davidson followed them out of the restroom while continuing his verbal harassment. He then allegedly returned to his car,

where he retrieved a gun and said, "Now what you got to say?" before shooting Houston in the chest.

Police are searching for Davidson and have yet to officially call it a hate crime, saying the investigation is "still very much open." Although the victim is reportedly not gay, Tennessee hate crimes law covers violence based on real or perceived sexual orientation.

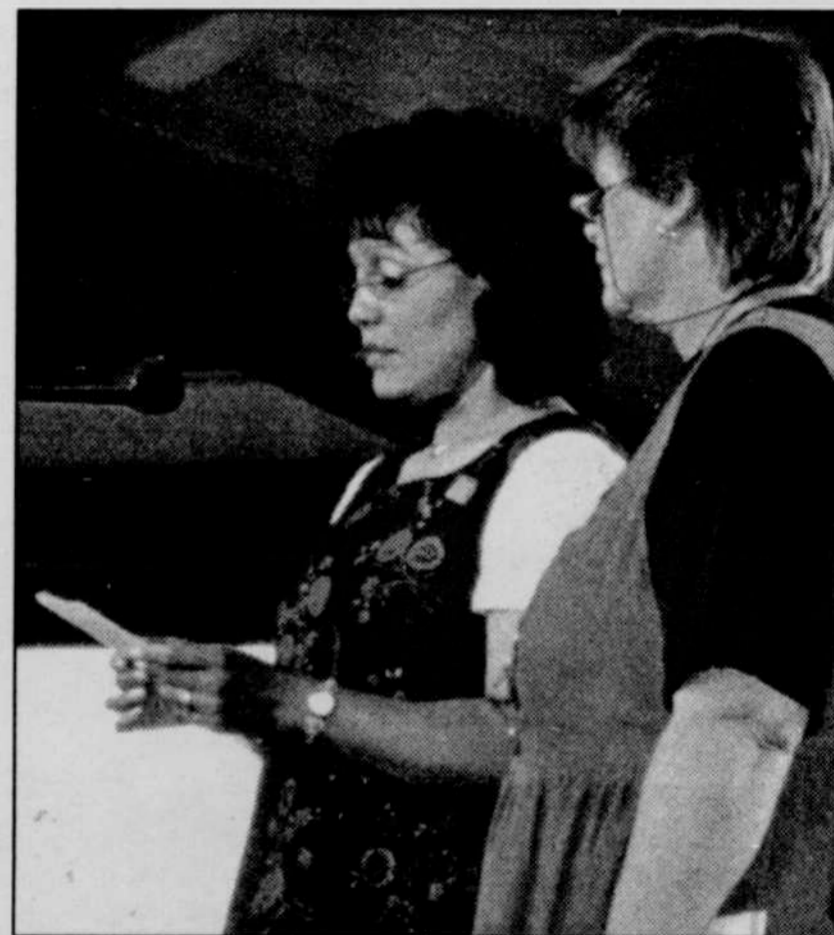
COLORADO
 The Victim Advocate's Office contacted Pauline Mitchell, mother of slain Navajo gay Two-Spirit youth Fred C. Martinez Jr., to inform her

Aug. 10 that a continuance has been granted to the attorney defending alleged perpetrator Shaun Murphy. In addition, the charges against him will be upgraded to first-degree murder.

"I am relieved and pleased that more appropriate charges are being brought and that my son's murder case is being taken more seriously by the district attorney's office," Mitchell said. "I hope that this takes us a step closer to justice for the death of my son."

In lieu of the preliminary hearing, originally scheduled for Aug. 13, Judge Christopher Leroi will hold a meeting with attorneys from both sides. A new date for the preliminary hearing will be set at that time.

Memorial vigils for the 16-year-old were held Aug. 10 and 11 in Denver and Cortez. Among the participants was Judy Shepard, mother of slain Wyoming University student Matthew Shepard.



Pauline Mitchell speaks during a vigil Aug. 11 in Cortez, Colo., with Carolyn Wagner, national vice president of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

"Nearly three years ago, the intense media attention focused on my son's death was a wake-up call for all of us: It brought the epidemic of hate violence out of obscurity and into the public debate," she said. "I see Fred's death, combined with a recent escalation of hate violence across the country, as a clear sign that there is much more to be done before we can live free from fear and hate."

NEVADA
 Jerry Lee Stamper-Ousley, 24, was found beaten to death June 30 inside his Las Vegas apartment complex.

Police have made no arrests, but the victim had gone to a gay bar earlier that evening. Investigators think robbery might be the motive but have not ruled out a possible hate crime.