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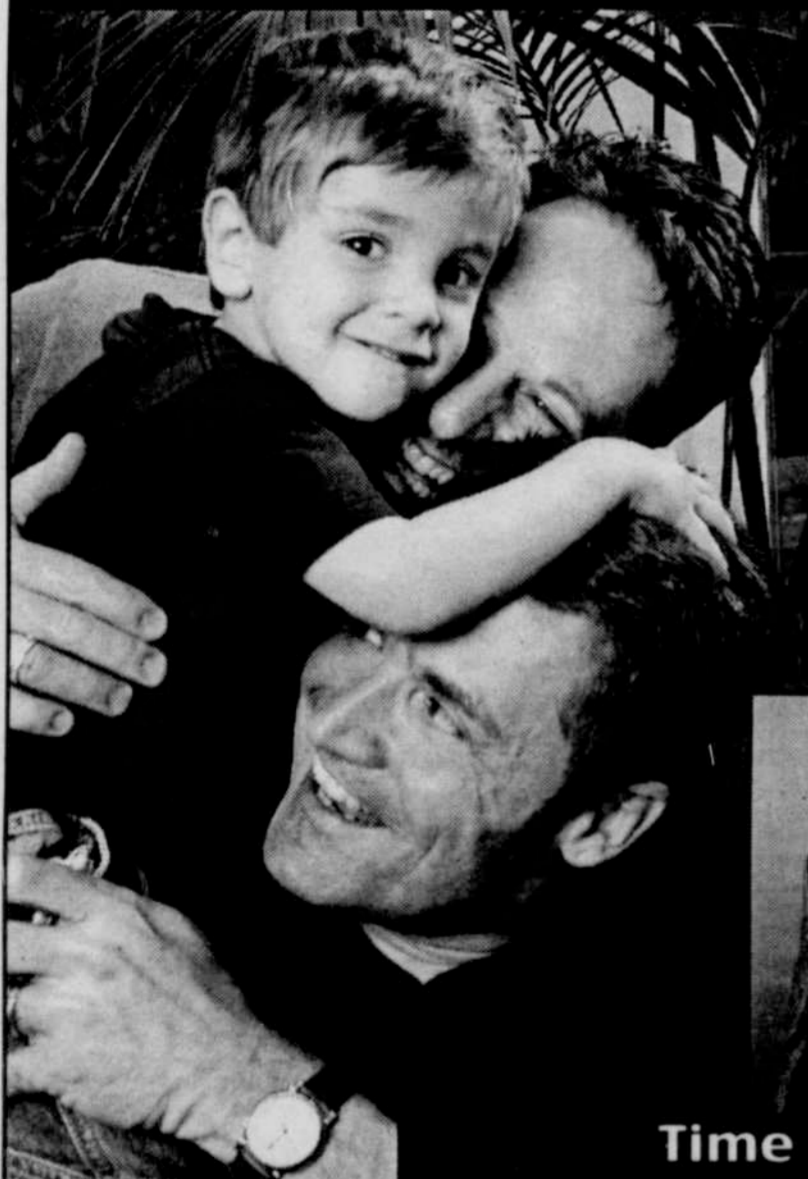
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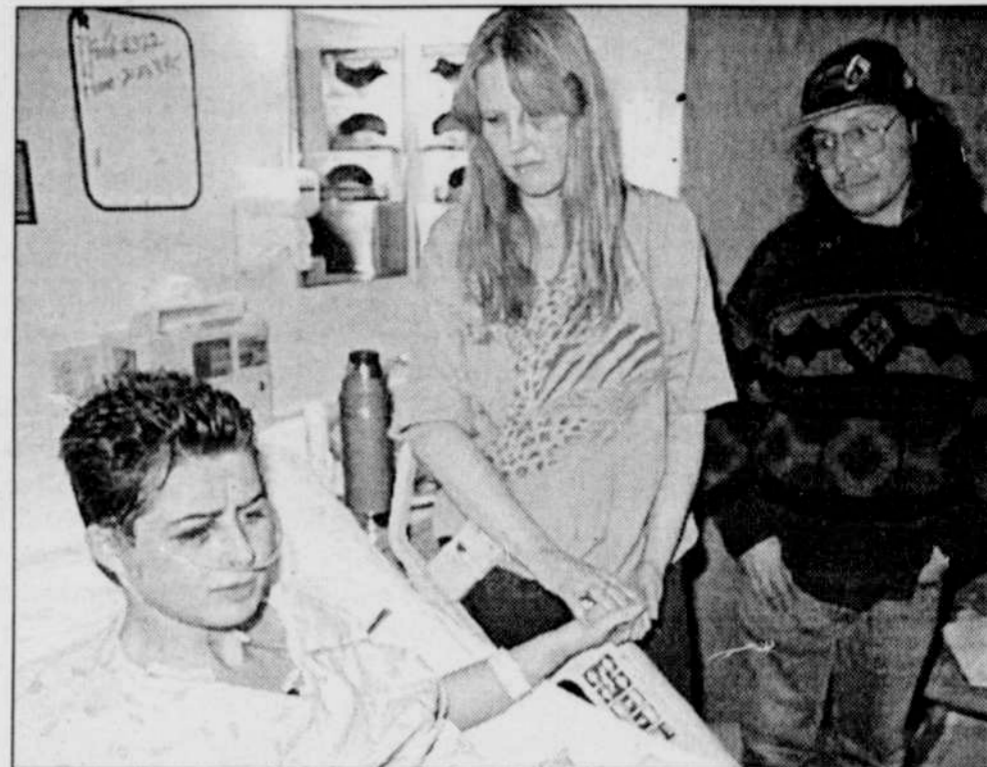
A federal civil rights claim was filed Feb. 7 in Denver to ensure justice is served after the brutal February 2001 beating of Kyle Skyock, a 16-year-old from Rifle. The Garfield County District Attorney's office has not yet charged the suspects with any crime, a decision that has come under heavy public fire.

Skyock was found unconscious on the roadside by a jogger after allegedly being beaten by four teen-age boys because they thought he was gay. After leaving a party with them, he said the car soon halted, and he was pulled from it and thrown to the ground.

The boys quickly overpowered Skyock, kicking him and ramming his head into the bumper. They threw him back in the vehicle and punched him some more, then pulled him out and kicked him again.

"Faggot," Skyock said he heard. "I want a turn with the bat! Give it to me. It's my turn, it's my turn."

Police initially believed that Skyock was drunk and that his injuries were a result of "falling down." Yet doctors said he suffered a fractured skull, a circle of burn blisters on his shoulder, a black eye, three broken ribs and bruises in the shape of a foot and a 2-by-4.



Kyle Skyock holds hands with his mother, Sharlene, as his father, Mike, stands next to them at St. Mary's Hospital in Grand Junction, Colo.

legislation also promotes the use of restorative justice and law enforcement training.

"The plea bargain does not resolve the outstanding issue of whether this murder will be classified as a hate crime," said Kathy Keyes, Four Corners Gay and Lesbian Alliance for Diversity board chairwoman. "Pauline Mitchell deserves to know that, and so does the rest of the community that Fred was a part of. If you look at the federal definition of a hate crime—a crime motivated all or in part by bias—it seems clear from witness' statements that Fred's murder was bias-motivated."

NATIONAL

C. Dixon Osburn, Servicemembers Legal Defense Network executive director, criticized a cartoon by Phillip Thompson appearing in the Feb. 11 issue of *Marine Corps Times* as offensive and disrespectful to military personnel and called on editors to issue an apology.

The drawing, titled "In the Trenches," refers to an Associated Press photo taken aboard the USS Enterprise last year in which the phrase "Highjack This Fags" was scrawled across a bomb onboard the aircraft carrier. Osburn called on Navy leaders to hold accountable servicemembers who were involved in writing the epithet.

In response, Rear Adm. S.R. Pietropaoli issued a statement calling the graffiti "inappropriate." He pledged the Navy's commitment to ensuring such statements were not used in the future.

Thompson's cartoon, which depicts a servicemember writing on a bomb, includes the following language, which Osburn says clearly implies the artist considers anti-gay animus acceptable in the armed forces: "Dear [Censored], We can't write 'inappropriate' notes on bombs anymore, but we're still going to kick your [Censored], you [Censored]ing [Censored]. Love, U.S.M.C."

Osburn added: "Our men and women in uniform deserve better than the second-class treatment this cartoon advocates. The message behind this cartoon—that anti-gay sentiment is acceptable in our military—contradicts Pentagon policy. Mr. Thompson would, we hope, never suggest that a racial epithet or disparaging remark against religious groups is acceptable."

Several organizations expressed cautious optimism at the announcement that Shaun Murphy plead guilty to second-degree murder Feb. 8 in Cortez for killing a 16-year-old Navajo youth.

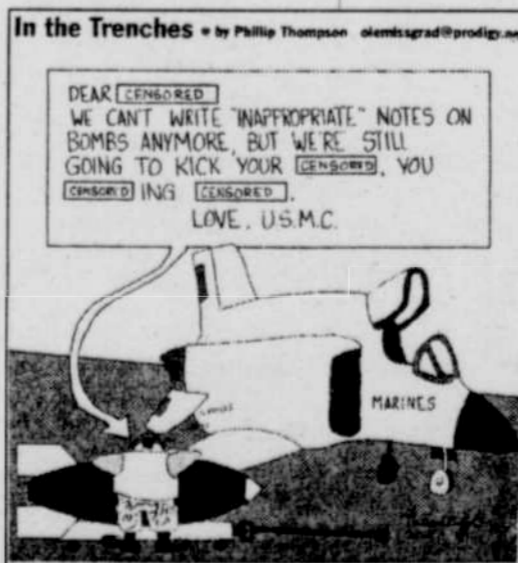
Fred Martinez's body was discovered June 21, 2001, almost a week after he was chased, bludgeoned and left to die of blood loss and exposure. A witness is reported to have claimed Murphy bragged he "beat up a fag."

In exchange for the plea, a first-degree murder charge was dropped. A sentencing hearing is scheduled to begin May 16.

"Nothing will bring back my son," Paula Mitchell said. "I hope that we will find out what really happened during the sentencing hearing. I hope that Shaun Murphy will be punished for this crime."

If the case had gone to trial, Mitchell might have had to spend weeks listening to the details of her son's murder, being cross-examined and listening to a defense attorney minimize the violent assault. "We hope first and foremost that the plea bargain reduces the amount of trauma and emotional hardship that Pauline Mitchell and Fred's family have to endure and that they feel that—to the extent possible within the law—this feels like accountability and some form of justice," said Denise de Percin, Colorado Anti-Violence Program executive director.

The Colorado Senate is considering state Rep. Mark Larson's Bias-Motivated Crimes Bill, which amends the Ethnic Intimidation Act to include sexual orientation, gender identity, age and disability. The



The National Education Association's board of directors OK'd a series of task force recommendations Feb. 8 to encourage the adoption of inclusive anti-harassment policies and development of factual materials for classroom and community discussion on these issues. Statistics indicate