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NATIONAL news



Walter Massey

GEORGIA

A student was brutally beaten with a baseball bat Nov. 3 at Morehouse College in Atlanta. Sophomore Aaron Price reportedly told campus police that junior Gregory Love had "looked at him" while they were both in a communal shower. The victim, who is not gay, said he had forgotten his glasses and couldn't tell whether the person in the next stall was his roommate.

Love is continuing his recovery in the Morehouse infirmary, according to the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. Price has been expelled.

Campus cops did not release any information on the subject until a newspaper reported on the incident almost a week later. They did not request help from the Atlanta Police Department and have not turned over any information to local authorities or their gay and lesbian community liaison.

A fraternity and a gay club on campus previously had planned a "Forum on Homophobia" for Nov. 11, but the Morehouse administration canceled the panel after the incident. Students gathered informally anyway but were restricted from talking about the assault.

Morehouse President Walter Massey spoke to a group of 300 students Nov. 19 and said he would form a committee to address diversity on campus. The audience reportedly was not allowed to ask questions during the session, which was not open to the public or media.

Prominent alumni from the historically black college include the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. According to one student, the consensus on campus is that "a lot of people believe that he deserved to get beaten up if he was looking in the shower stall, but everyone thinks the bat was a little extreme."

CALIFORNIA

Newark police took a fourth suspect into custody Nov. 16 in connection with the murder of Gwen Araujo, a trans 17-year-old who reportedly was attacked during a party when it was revealed that she was anatomically male.

Authorities have hinted that other arrests might be made. "The trail seems to be hot," Lt. Tom Milner said.

Jason Cazares, 22, initially was suspected to have participated in the murder but claimed he had left the party before the incident took place. With insufficient evidence, police were unable to press charges until now.

Cazares joins 19-year-old Jaron Nabors, who claims he is innocent, and 22-year-olds Jose Merel and Michael Magidson, who will enter their pleas Dec. 13. They allegedly slashed Araujo with a knife, beat her, dragged her into a garage, strangled her with a rope, bound her wrists and ankles, wrapped her body in a sheet and buried it in a shallow grave more than 150 miles from the crime scene.

ILLINOIS

The nation's second-largest county overwhelmingly passed an ordinance Nov. 19 prohibiting discrimination based on gender

identity or expression. Cook County becomes the 11th jurisdiction this year to outlaw bias against trans people in housing, employment, credit transactions and public accommodations.

"Trans people experience discrimination, and such discrimination is unacceptable and should be unlawful," said Rick Garcia, Equality Illinois political director. "We hope that other jurisdictions join Cook County in protecting all of their citizens."

Chicago passed an identical ordinance last month, and Decatur OK'd similar legislation in October. A statewide gay and trans civil rights bill is pending before the Illinois General Assembly and is expected to pass early next year.



Erika Harold is crowned by Miss America 2002 Katie Harman of Gresham on Sept. 21 in Atlantic City, N.J.

NATIONAL

Saying "abstinence-only" programs are "nothing short of a public health hazard for our nation's youth," Lambda Legal sent a letter Nov. 25 to Miss America 2003, Erika Harold, requesting clarification of her views and information from the Miss America Organization on three presentations she made to students last month.

"'Abstinence-only' education is becoming one of the biggest obstacles in preventing the spread of HIV," said Michael Adams, education and public affairs director. "These programs provide inaccurate, incomplete and misleading information to young people—often even refusing to explain how HIV is spread or how condoms can help prevent HIV transmission."

Harold was crowned Miss America in September when her platform was preventing harassment and bullying in schools, but she later changed her platform to encouraging young people to abstain from sex, which widely has been interpreted as support for "abstinence-only" programs. Lambda Legal noted that former Miss Americas, as well as pageant titleholders from dozens of states and other countries, have expressed their support of people with HIV and AIDS and their commitment to help stop the spread of the disease.

"In the last few weeks, Erika Harold and the Miss America Organization have gotten something of a 'free pass' by talking vaguely about her intentions to promote 'abstinence,'" Adams said. "Now that she's out talking to students, [they] have an obligation to explain whether she's talking about abstinence as one option along with safe-sex information or pushing an extreme and dangerous 'abstinence-only' agenda."

Under a White House proposal that potentially would privatize half of the federal work force, employees would lose nondiscrimi-