

THE FIRST THREE PAGES ARE STORIES WHICH HAVE SOUNDBITES FOR GOV. GERINGER & THE NEWSREPORTERS FOR HIS PRESS CONFERENCE. THE LAST 3 PAGES ARE BILL MCKINNEY'S PRIMARY INTERVIEW WITH *THE DENVER POST* FROM WHICH YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO PICK OUT QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES FOR HIS LITTLE PRESS CONFERENCE (PG. 49). WITH THAT CONFERENCE ENDING SOONER NOW, YOU MIGHT NOT NEED TOO MUCH MATERIAL.

At the University of Wyoming, where Shepard was a political science major, people are stunned. Student Jody Stoner (ph) summed up many statements.

JODY STONER, STUDENT, UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING: These kinds of hate crimes need to stop. And -- I mean, it's ridiculous. How would you like to be beaten to death just because you liked boys? You know, it's ridiculous.

BECK: University and state officials say this is not the type of thing that happens in Laramie or the state. A former Wyoming equal rights activist, Denise DePearson (ph), says gays face harassment in Wyoming, but it's normally low-level.

DENISE DEPEARSON, FORMER EQUAL RIGHTS ACTIVIST: Wyoming hasn't been particularly accepting of gay and lesbian people. On the other hand, it does have, I think, the history of a very sort of committed sense of fairness that people shouldn't be targeted. And it's again, so that individuality, about sort of leaving people alone and letting them live their lives.

BECK: DePearson joins the Wyoming ACLU, and a number of others, who want hate crimes legislation passed that will prosecute low-level harassment so it does not get out of hand. Such legislation has failed over the last three years. President Clinton points to this case as he calls for an expanded federal hate crime law himself.

Governor Jim Geringer says he will only support such legislation if it takes existing state laws a step further.

JIM GERINGER, GOVERNOR, WYOMING: What we've seen proposed in the past as so-called anti-hate legislation has not been substantive enough to give us any extra leverage for enforcement. So, before we just go all out and say we got to have a bias crimes or hate crimes bill, I'd like to know what actually would be contained in it, because the ones in the past have not been -- have not added to what we already have upon statutes here in Wyoming, and we're tough.

BECK: The governor maintains that the reason this has received national attention is that it has never happened in Wyoming before. Saturday was Homecoming Day and several in the University of Wyoming Annual Parade, and at the game, wore yellow anti-hate armbands. Vigils are taking place tonight and later in the week.

For NPR News, I'm Bob Beck in Laramie, Wyoming. Oct. 11 1998

FEENEY: Bills to punish hate crimes have failed in each of the last three Wyoming legislative sessions. Opponents of such legislation claimed it was not necessary because such crimes do not occur in Wyoming. But even with evidence in the Shepard case to contradict that assertion, Wyoming lawmakers think a new law might not make that much difference.

Wyoming **governor Jim Geringer** says he's open to any bill that would really provide more of a deterrent to hate crimes. He says past bills have not clearly defined what hate means.

GOVERNOR JIM GERINGER (R-WY): What they need to be clear on is what type of enhanced penalty would be proposed if a person is singled out with the motive being anti-gay, anti-black, anti-Jew, anti whatever it might be. So it's an issue of how do you -- how do you properly define and how do you legally define something for an enhanced penalty.

NPR News Oct. 12 1998

BOB BECK, WYOMING PUBLIC RADIO REPORTER: Prosecutors say that now that Shepherd has died, they are considering first-degree murder charges against the two men accused of the attack. Twenty-one year old Russell Henderson (ph) and 22 year old Aaron McKinney (ph) are accused of taking Shepard from a Laramie bar, driving him outside of town, tying him to a fence and beating him with a gun.

Authorities say they left them to die. **Governor Jim Geringer** spoke out against the crime and ordered flags to fly a half-staff. He calls it vicious.

GOVERNOR JIM GERINGER , WYOMING: Several very sick and twisted people cause something to happen that nobody in Wyoming accepts. It's that simple. So that's -- that's the reaction overall. It's -- it basically now boils down to a call to conscience and say we need to do something so that we definitely demonstrate that we are the equality state, that we -- we value all human life.

NPR News Oct. 12 1998

Shepard's death also caused Wyoming **Governor Jim Geringer** to say he will reconsider his lack of support for a state hate-crime law, but he continued to express doubt about its necessity.

The two suspects in Shepard's slaying -- Aaron J. McKinney, 22, and Russell A. Henderson, 21 -- could face the death penalty if they are convicted of first-degree murder. They also face charges of kidnapping and aggravated robbery.

"If capital punishment is the result, how do you enhance that?" Geringer said. "You can only do it once."

Boston Globe Oct 13, 1998

Wyoming Gov. Jim Geringer said Monday morning that he did not want to comment on whether a death sentence might be appropriate if McKinney and Henderson are convicted. He said he didn't want to prejudge the pair.

Although there has not yet been a state-sanctioned execution during Geringer's four years in

office, he said he is not opposed to the death penalty.

"I'm willing to support the law as it's currently written," he said. "If there is a crime deserving capital punishment, I would not put it aside."

Geringer echoed the concerns of McKinney's father, **Bill McKinney**, who told The Denver Post on Saturday that he thought media saturation coverage of the case would make it impossible for his son to get a fair trial.

"We have to be careful not to rush to judgment," Geringer said. "Let the system work."

Either way, if guilty, Henderson and the younger McKinney deserve to be severely punished, Geringer said.

As for the nationwide calls for a hate-crime law in **Wyoming** after news of Shepard's beating spread, Geringer said he thought it was time for the state to address the issue, if carefully. He said he has already suggested to legislators some ways that the issue could be addressed, but he stressed that he didn't want political pressure from gay-rights advocates and others inside and outside of **Wyoming** to force lawmakers to too hastily draw up hate-crime legislation. Even if robbery, and not hate,

"This has become a rallying point of sorts," he said. "These things don't just arise out of one incident."

The Denver Post 10/13/1998

Beating wasn't a hate crime, suspect's family says

The Denver Post - Sunday, October 11, 1998

Author/Byline: Jim Hughes and David Olinger Denver Post Staff Writers

LARAMIE - The two men accused of bludgeoning a gay college student targeted him because he flirted with one of them at a bar, the father and girlfriend of a suspect said Saturday.

Aaron James McKinney and Russell Arthur Henderson never set out to nearly kill University of **Wyoming** student Matthew Shepard, McKinney's father and girlfriend said.

But McKinney, 22, was embarrassed that Shepard made two passes at him in front of his friends Tuesday night at the Fireside bar, said **Bill McKinney** and Kristen Price.

To get back at Shepard for the apparent humiliation, McKinney and Henderson, 21, lured the political science major outside to rob him, they said.

Sitting inside Price's small apartment in a dilapidated wooden house in northern Laramie, the elder McKinney's eyes brimmed. He said there's no excuse for what his son and his friend are accused of doing to the 21-year-old Shepard.

But there isn't really a good reason for the nationwide media attention over the case, either, he said.

"The news has already taken this up and blew it totally out of proportion, because it involved a homosexual," McKinney said. "Had this been a heterosexual these two boys decided to take out and rob, this never would have made the national news. Now my son is guilty before he's even had a trial." The national discussion of the attack has centered on two things: that Shepard, 21, is gay and that he reportedly told this to his suspected attackers before they lured him out of the downtown Laramie bar.

The girlfriends of McKinney and Henderson - 18-year-old Price and Chastity Pasley, 20 - face charges of being accessories after the fact. Price and McKinney have a 4-month-old son, Cameron.

Price admitted she and Pasley, who attends the University of **Wyoming** with Shepard, initially lied to police about the whereabouts of their boyfriends Tuesday night. But she said neither she nor the other three suspects hate gays.

"It wasn't meant to be a hate crime," she said. "They just wanted to rob him."

The four suspects are best friends who spend time together almost every day, Price said.

She said she was released on a \$30,000 bond before the first court hearing Friday partly because she was the first to tell investigators the truth of what she knew about that night and partly because she had Cameron to take care of.

Pasley is still in custody; her bail is set at \$30,000 cash. Henderson and McKinney are also still in jail; bail for each is set at \$100,000 cash.

McKinney was the last of the four suspects taken into custody. Authorities arrested him Thursday at Poudre Valley Hospital in Fort Collins, where he was being treated for a head injury. McKinney apparently sustained his injury in a separate altercation in Laramie, authorities said. Details were unknown.

Bill McKinney and Price said their understanding of what happened Tuesday night and early Wednesday is based on conversations Price had with the younger McKinney when he came home disoriented and covered in blood about 1:30 a.m. Wednesday. Some of the blood was his own, she said.

"He walked in and said he thought he had killed someone and that he had gotten beat up," she said.

She said that after she had cleaned him up, given him a glass of water and laid him down, Aaron McKinney told her his version of the story that would soon change their lives.

"He said he met a guy at a bar," she said. "The guy had told him that he was gay, and they decided to take him out and rob him. That was their only intention. He said (Shepard) pushed himself onto him and that he embarrassed him and Russ in front of all their friends and everybody at the Fireside."

Price and **Bill McKinney** both said Aaron McKinney doesn't like to be embarrassed in front of other people.

Neither McKinney nor Henderson is much bigger than the 5-foot-2, 105-pound Shepard. But McKinney's temper can be fierce when provoked, and he sometimes does stupid things to impress a crowd, his girlfriend and father said.

When he noticed that other people in the bar were snickering, Matt Shepard probably changed in his eyes from somebody not all that important to him to somebody with whom he had to get even, Price said.

"I guess they (the people in the bar) knew that Matt Shepard was gay and maybe it got around that Aaron was gay or something," she said. "Later on, Aaron did say he told him he was gay just to rob him, because he wanted to take his money for embarrassing him," she said.

McKinney's story, as remembered by Price, echoed the version prosecutors have presented in court documents.

"He told me that they took him out past Wal-Mart" near the eastern edge of town where Shepard was found the next evening, she said. "Matt asked, 'When are we going to get to where you live?' and Aaron told him, 'Guess what, I'm not gay, and you just got jacked.' He asked him to give him his wallet, and the guy gave him his wallet."

McKinney and Henderson then continued in **Bill McKinney** 's pickup truck to a spot where they planned to tie Shepard up, return to Laramie and burglarize his house, she said. Henderson tied him up and McKinney took the student's shoes, she said, because he thought Shepard would be able to free himself from the fence and walk back to town. She said they wanted enough time to burglarize his house before Shepard could report his kidnapping and attack to police. But for some reason, they kept beating him, she said.

Bill McKinney said that's what he doesn't understand, quickly adding that the whole series of events is inexcusable. He said it hurts him to know his son has the potential for such apparent viciousness.

"None of that ever should have happened," he said. "They should never have decided to rob him or beat him up or any of it."

Price agreed. "It just got out of hand, I guess, and they realized he was unconscious and that's when they decided to leave."

Russell Henderson and Chastity Pasley lived at the cheap end of Laramie, near the railroad tracks to the Mountain Cement Co., in a neighborhood where rusting cars and junk piles are stored in yards for future use. They paid \$340 a month for an aging mobile home with a quilt hanging in its front door window.

People who know Henderson in Laramie find it hard to believe he could do something so cruel. He drank, they say, and he had flashes of temper, but mostly he was the mild-mannered, polite young man who answered "yes sir" to all the judge's questions after kidnapping, robbery and attempted-murder charges against him were read in court.

Carson and Sherry Aanenson, the couple who rented a mobile home to Henderson for three years, called him a follower, not a leader. They found it hard to imagine him initiating the savage beating described in court Friday.

Sherry Aanenson remembered Henderson at last year's Christmas party at the Chuck Wagon restaurant in Laramie, shyly asking her, "When you get a chance, can I have a dance?" But now she wonders about something else she noticed, something hollow in his eyes.

"I felt just like my experience with Russell was - he kinda had that little blank-look stare about him," she said.

Caption: PHOTO: Associated Press Loui Temeer, left, comforts Gina St. Brigid Saturday night during a vigil for Matthew Shepard at Poudre Valley Hospital in Fort Collins.