

NEWS DIGEST

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McKinney gets life in prison

LARAMIE, Wyo. (AP) — Aaron McKinney, who beat gay college student Matthew Shepard and left him to die on the prairie, avoided the death penalty Thursday by agreeing to serve life in prison without parole and promising never to appeal his conviction.

Shepard's parents agreed to the deal.

"I would like nothing better than to see you die, Mr. McKinney, but now is the time to begin the healing process," Shepard's father, Dennis, said in court. "Every time you celebrate Christmas, a birthday or the Fourth of July, remember Matthew isn't. Every time you wake up in that prison cell, remember you had the opportunity and the ability to stop your actions that night."

McKinney, 22, a high-school dropout and drug dealer, is the second defendant in Shepard's slaying to get life in prison. Russell Henderson, 22, pleaded guilty to murder earlier this year.

McKinney was convicted Wednesday of murder, aggravated robbery and kidnapping for luring Shepard from a Laramie bar, robbing him of \$20, lashing him to a fence and

cracking his skull with blows from a pistol. Investigators said that robbery was the main motive but that McKinney and Henderson singled out the slightly built Shepard because he was gay.

The jury was to begin hearing arguments Thursday on whether McKinney should get the death penalty or life in prison. Instead, he accepted a deal that his lawyers had proposed to prosecutors Wednesday.

"I really don't know what to say, other than that I'm truly sorry to the entire Shepard family," McKinney said in court. "Never will a day go by I won't be ashamed for what I have done."

Dennis Shepard said his family wanted the trial to show that "this was a hate crime, pure and simple, with the added ingredient of robbery." He also asked Congress to pass a stronger hate-crime law.

"You screwed up, Mr. McKinney," Shepard said. "You made the world realize that a person's lifestyle is not a reason for discrimination, intolerance, persecution and violence."

Shepard also said he supported the death penalty.

Prosecutor Cal Rerucha said he

"A lot of times, UNL isolates itself from the community. Students don't (always) have the funds, but they do have the power."

JESSICA LOPEZ

co-chairwoman of the SIT service learning committee

didn't want the deal at first, but Shepard's mother, Judy, wanted to show tolerance because her son believed in it. Judy Shepard, with the aid of investigators, helped negotiate the final sentencing agreement.

"She's a remarkable woman to be able to go through what she has and to do what she has done," Rerucha said. "And what she has done is said Matthew stood for something and that something was tolerance, a tolerance of people."

"And she told me at this point in the proceedings that it would be wrong if our motives were revenge instead of justice."

As Dennis Shepard spoke, he paused at times to wipe away tears, his

voice breaking. Several jurors wept, along with members of both legal teams, spectators, Shepard's mother and friends of the Shepards.

McKinney's eyes welled up at times as he listened. McKinney's step-sister walked out crying, her head resting on McKinney's father's shoulder.

Matthew Shepard was a 21-year-old freshman studying political science at the University of Wyoming.

Rerucha said he found it ironic that the defense proposed the deal and asked the Shepards to "give some relief, some type of pity to a person who had murdered their son."

"I will never get over Judy Shepard's capacity to forgive," he said.

Man charged with Hawaii murders

HONOLULU (AP) — A copier repairman who collected firearms and tropical fish was ordered to be held on \$7 million bail Thursday after being charged with gunning down seven of his co-workers at a Xerox Corp. parts warehouse.

Byran Uyesugi was charged with one count of first-degree murder and seven counts of second-degree murder for allegedly going on a shooting spree Tuesday morning with a 9 mm handgun. Under state law, a first-degree murder charge covers multiple killings.

Uyesugi, 40, was arrested Tuesday afternoon following a five-hour armed standoff with SWAT teams.

The 15-year Xerox employee, described by his boss as quiet and reserved, was to be arraigned this morning. A preliminary hearing will be held Tuesday so Uyesugi can enter a plea.

The first-degree murder charge carries a mandatory sentence of life imprisonment without parole. Hawaii has no death penalty.

Police have not discussed a motive. Uyesugi met with his attorneys for the first time for 15 minutes Thursday.

"He's pretty reserved at this point," Jerel Fonseca said.

He declined to divulge anything Uyesugi said during the meeting but said the defense would consider an insanity defense.

A step-by-step account of the shooting was provided in a police affidavit filed in court Wednesday.

Xerox worker Randall Shin told investigators he was at his desk in a second-floor office just after 8 a.m. Tuesday when he heard gunshots to his right and saw Ronald Kawamae, 54, slump over his chair.

Another worker, Jason Balatico, 33, attempted to leave the room when more shots were fired. Balatico, bleeding, fell to the floor, Shin said.

Uyesugi then allegedly walked down a hallway to a conference room where he was to attend a meeting with colleagues. He then allegedly killed Ford Kanehira, 41; Peter Mark, 46; Ron Kataoka, 50; Melvin Lee, 58 and John Sakamoto, 36, before walking out of the building, getting into his Xerox van and driving away, police said.

Uyesugi, a bachelor who lived with his bachelor brother and widowed father, drove several miles and parked near a nature center. The standoff began after a jogger spotted the van.

Police: Seattle shooting was a 'calculated' event

SEATTLE (AP) — Residents left their porch lights on and walked their children to school Thursday in the middle-class neighborhood where a camouflaged gunman killed two boat shop employees and wounded two others before vanishing.

Police called Wednesday's shooting a "deliberate, calculated act" and tried to reassure residents of Seattle's Wallingford district that they were safe, even with the killer at large. Police said they did not know his identity and had not found the handgun used in the attack.

"We are confident this was not a random act," Police Chief Norm Stamper said. "I think that those who live and work in that area can be assured that they are not at risk. ... This is not an individual who is going to repeat the act."

Stamper would not elaborate on why police thought it was a deliberate attack.

One man was questioned and released overnight.

Police were searching in the neighborhood around Northlake Shipyard for the man in his 30s who entered the nondescript, two-story building, strode into a back office with gun drawn and opened fire without a word.

Peter Giles, 27, and Russell James Brisendine, 43, were killed at the shipyard.

The two wounded workers were in serious condition.

The suspect was described as having curly brown hair and a mustache and was wearing a baseball cap, sunglasses and a dark overcoat over camouflage clothing.

Police used search lights through the night as they checked yards, basements and garden sheds.

Residents also left porch lights on, making the neighborhood "so bright you could barely sleep," said Paula Nemzek, a neighborhood resident.

Nemzek was waiting with her daughter, Cezanne Camacho, for a

"I believe that we will catch this person."

NORM STAMPER

Seattle police chief

school bus Thursday half a mile from the shipyard.

"We're still a little worried," she said.

She usually walks her daughter to the bus stop, but "a lot of other moms are saying they feel a little worried about letting their kids walk to the bus stop by themselves today."

At Hamilton Middle School, the school closest to the shooting scene, doors were locked and five security guards were on duty rather than the normal force of one.

Students had to eat lunch indoors despite the sunny weather and were escorted between classrooms and the main building.

Connie Voget, who lives across from Hamilton, took her poodle for a walk in the sun.

"Of course I'm concerned, but I think that everything reasonable is being done. I cannot be ruled by fear," she said. But she added: "I won't walk near the site. I won't walk in any of the parks where they are searching."

Stamper said detectives were sorting through hundreds of calls and tips and "clearly have a better picture" a day after the attack. But he would not say anything about a motive and gave few details of the investigation.

"I believe that we will catch this person," he said.

Jeff Sidebotham, a manager at Seaborne Pile Driving, whose office is in the shipyard building, arrived about 7:45 a.m. Thursday but then couldn't bring himself to go inside.

"I'm scared to go in there now," he said. "I got in there right after that happened — too close for comfort."

World and Nation

Datelines

■ Russia

Russia reopens crossings out of Chechnya

SLEPTSOVSKAYA, Russia (AP) — Russia allowed thousands of frightened and angry civilians to flee war-battered Chechnya on Thursday after blocking them at the frontier for more than a week.

More than 200,000 people have fled Chechnya since Russia began the offensive in September, most to neighboring Ingushetia.

Russia closed all crossings out of Chechnya last week. It opened others on Monday but allowed only a few people to cross into Ingushetia, sparking sharp criticism at home and abroad.

Officials relaxed controls at the Sleptsovskaya crossing, where thousands of refugees had massed, on Wednesday and allowed many more people to cross Thursday. Russia also allowed others to enter Ingushetia at a crossing farther north, at Malgabek.

There were no immediate figures on the numbers who crossed Thursday.

■ Rhode Island

Navy awaiting calm waters in search for black boxes

NEWPORT, R.I. (AP) — With a break in the weather, a Navy salvage ship was finally freed Thursday to take its divers on a 10-hour trip through high waters to the grim crash site of EgyptAir Flight 990.

Investigators were hoping to dodge foul weather long enough today to search for the plane's "black boxes," which they hope hold the secret to the cause of the crash off the coast of Nantucket, Mass.

The Navy was relying on seas calming just enough to drop a giant underwater robot — the Deep Drone — into the Atlantic, where it can be lowered 270 feet to the ocean floor to retrieve wreckage and bodies. Divers aboard the USS Grapple will try to make the treacherous journey as well.

The black boxes — the flight data recorder and the cockpit voice recorder — are considered keys to figuring out why Flight 990 plummeted into the ocean on Sunday, killing all 217 on board.

■ Michigan

Backstreet Boys refuse leukemia patient's wish

WARREN, Mich. (AP) — A 5-year-old girl undergoing chemotherapy for leukemia had one wish — to meet the Backstreet Boys when they perform in suburban Detroit this weekend.

But the pop quintet refused Morgan Zalewski's request, which was made on her behalf by The Rainbow Connection, an association that grants the wishes of dying and seriously ill children.

The group gets "thousands and thousands of requests" daily from organizations like The Rainbow Connection and can't possibly grant them all, said Marcee Rondan, vice president of MSO, the Los Angeles-based firm that handles publicity for the Backstreet Boys.

Even though Morgan was disappointed that she wouldn't meet the band in person, she isn't angry and plans to see them perform at The Palace of Auburn Hills, her father said Monday.

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