

GayCommunityNews

Vol. 8, No. 27

(617) 426-4469

©GCN, 1981

January 31, 1981

Another Gay Man Murdered Here

By David Morris

BRAINTREE, MA — The body of a gay man was discovered on the kitchen floor of the house where he lived alone in this Boston suburb after a neighbor noticed the odor of gas in the area.

An autopsy revealed that 41-year-old Francis Hussey of 1208 Liberty St., Braintree, had died of massive head injuries and had suffered numerous lacerations, bruises and contusions.

According to Chief Polio of the Braintree Police Department, Hussey's neighbor noticed the body through a window at about 8:00 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 17 while investigating the odor of gas in the area. Polio said Hussey appeared to have been dead "for some time."

There was no sign of forced entry and nothing appears to have been stolen. Polio told GCN the gas in Hussey's house had been turned on with the pilots extinguished and the telephone line had been cut.

Polio said robbery had not been ruled out as a motive for the killing "but I would have to put it at a low priority."

Polio told GCN the murder was not known to be a "gay slaying." But, he added, "There are strong implications that would lead us to want to delve very deeply into it, possibly falling into the category of a gay-connected murder." He declined to elaborate.

Hussey was last seen alive at about 11:30 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 15 by the same neighbor who discovered his body. Hussey's car was found on the morning of Sunday, Jan. 18 in the parking garage of the Braintree rapid transit station. A parking ticket on the car was stamped 7:30 p.m. Friday.

At least six gay men have been murdered in Boston and its suburbs in the past eight months, four of them in their own homes. Three suspects are presently in custody in connection with four of the murders.



Denise Kreps

David Armanroot

Lesbian Wins Battle For Job

MARTINEZ, CA — Lesbian Denise Kreps has finally won a legal battle to be hired as a Contra Costa County sheriff's deputy.

Sheriff Richard Rainey, who disqualified Kreps in the fall of 1979 because she is a lesbian, signed an agreement January 12 allowing her to resume interviewing for the job.

Assistant Sheriff Duayne Dillon announced at a press conference that the agreement was signed after Deputy County Counsel John Milgate advised Rainey that he had insufficient grounds on which to appeal an August Superior Court ruling ordering him to complete the interviewing process.

That ruling, by Judge Richard Calhoun, said that Rainey could not deny Kreps a job on the basis of her sexual orientation (see GCN Vol. 8, No. 9).

Under the conditions of the settlement, the sheriff's department will hold a job opening for Kreps

to apply. If hired, she will be granted seniority retroactive to last January, when she would have been hired if the process had not been interrupted.

"We are just delighted with the decision," Donna Hitchens, Kreps' attorney, told reporters. "It means from this point on people will be judged in Contra Costa on their own qualifications and merits as opposed to the use of stereotypes."

Kreps, 26, a sheriff's dispatcher from Pleasant Hill, scored 16th out of 181 eligible applicants for deputy jobs in physical and written exams given in the fall of 1979.

Rainey rejected her application at that time because she revealed on a lie detector test routinely given to all applicants that she had been a lesbian since age 17 — a fact she had not told her family or otherwise made public.

Rainey contended that Kreps' Continued on Page 6



Committee for the Visibility of the Other Black Woman:

The Black Lesbian

Black Lesbians Gather In First Eastern Conference

By Jil Clark

NEW YORK CITY — Black lesbians from as far away as Chicago and New Orleans gathered here January 16-18 for the First Annual Black Lesbian Conference of the Eastern Regional States.

Members of the Committee for the Visibility of the Other Black Women (CVOBW), the organizers of the conference, say they are "thrilled" at the positive feedback they received from the 249 black lesbians who attended the conference, and hopeful that many more black lesbians will participate in future conferences.

The goal of the CVOBW was to provide black lesbians with an opportunity "to know who we are, where we are located, and what we are doing to eliminate the oppression we share as black lesbian women."

Through the efforts of the seven-woman committee, the conference has spawned a much-needed black lesbian communication network.

"We were able to get people to participate in our networking workshops," committee member Gail Johnson told GCN. "Now more black lesbians know other black lesbians are around the country. With the economic situa-

tion the way it is for black people especially, it may be necessary to move around the country [to find work], and we need to know where other black lesbians are."

CVOBW member Jeanne Gray explained how, as a result of the conference, many black lesbians will no longer be isolated from other black lesbians. "Many different segments of the black community pulled together. Many women came all the way to New York to discover who are the other lesbians in her community. It's nice to know there's somebody there besides you."

But the conference was not only about black lesbians becoming visible to themselves; it was also about becoming visible to the culture at large as a viable political force."

Beverly Smith, a Boston lesbian-feminist who cofacilitated a workshop, entitled "Black Women And Feminism," views the conference as "a very positive step forward...I saw women from all along the east coasts and various parts of the country who I'd seen at smaller conferences in the past. There is some kind of black lesbian community growing."

The conference, which was open to all women, consisted mostly of

workshops on a wide variety of topics ranging from the history of Afro-American women's music to alternative housing modes; from African matriarch to hypnosis; from black women's sexuality to writing and publishing. One conferee found the presentation on African goddesses "especially reaffirming" to her spiritually, "since the other goddesses lesbians talk about are not black — though I've been told Sappho was black."

Lowe continued, "We need to first assume our power — assume the word 'woman' is beautiful, assume the word 'lesbian' is beautiful — and all those things they taught us about women and lesbians will go away."

"Deepinside we all know that we're very fine, it's just that everything tells us we're not. We need to begin to contradict the categories: you are black and therefore you are this, etc...."

"I hope that black women [at the workshop] had a glimpse of the fact that *it is in us*: the power to stand up and be ourselves again."

Lowe said that black women expressed a great deal of anger at the white women in the workshop. One white woman, who described her experience in the workshop as

Continued on page 3

Lesbians, Gay Men Visible At Buffalo Anti-Nazi Demo

Compiled by Joanne Brown

BUFFALO, NY — A neo-Nazi group tried to hold a "white power" rally in Buffalo on Martin Luther King Memorial Day, but the only ones who showed up were four Nazis and 2000 people demonstrating against the white supremacist National Socialist Party of America (NSPA).

Among the protesters was a visible contingent of at least 100 lesbians and gay men, according to Valerie Colangelo of the Martin Luther King Memorial Day Rally Coalition, which organized the event to counter the Nazi action.

"The Nazis decided to hold a 'white civil rights' rally on Martin Luther King Day, and handed out leaflets calling for '100 white men with guts' to show up. We thought this was blasphemous, and organized the rally not only to protest this particular Nazi action but to make a strong statement against the growth of the right-wing in Buffalo and all over the country."

Racism in Buffalo has drawn national attention with the '22 Calibre' killings of seven black men since September. Colangelo said that physical assaults on gay men have also been on the in-

crease.

"The gay community here is experiencing a lot of repression lately, and the number of recent attacks on gay men at the bars has made a lot of lesbians and gay men identify with the tension and fear in the black community."

Colangelo said that the police have made little effort to catch those responsible for the murders and the assaults.

The circumstances surrounding the coalition's organization of the rally were intensified by a ban placed by Mayor Jim Griffin on both the Nazi rally and the Martin Luther King Memorial Rally.

"Griffin knew about the Nazi rally for a month. He only declared the ban when he found out about our counter-protest. He baited our rally publicly, telling people that if they came they would get involved in violence or be arrested. He phoned numerous religious and public interest groups, trying to get them to avoid our rally," said Colangelo.

More than four hundred policemen in riot gear were sent to the rally along with guns, dogs, and helicopters. However, the rally was peaceful, with no arrests or outbursts of violence. According

to the *Toronto Globe and Mail*, only four Nazis turned up — two were leaders of the Canadian neo-Nazi group, the Western Guard.

"We had obviously kept the Nazis from coming, and the spirits at the march were really high. We had a real sense of victory, not only against the Nazis but against the racist city administration," Colangelo told GCN.

Groups from Boston, New York, Rochester and other cities were bused in to show national support for the anti-Nazi rally. Ed Childs, of the organizing group from Boston, said that a wide range of groups were represented at the rally.

"There was one contingent of white high school kids in football jackets, were there a lot of people from unions — it really was a diverse crowd. We got a really good response, too, when we were marching through the downtown a lot of people waved at us or joined in."

Colangelo said that the rally itself featured sixteen speakers from various anti-racist organizations, including a black lesbian feminist from New York City who urged gays to become more organized in fighting the right-wing.

Clark, Jil. "Black Lesbians Gather in First Eastern Conference." *Gay Community News*, vol. 8, no. 27, 31 Jan. 1981, pp. [1]+. Archives of Sexuality and Gender, link.gale.com/apps/doc/LIPQZU586446145/AHSI?u=nypl&sid=bookmark-AHSI. Accessed 2 Apr. 2023.