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The Rockies

Police seek two men in Berg death probe

Associated Press

DENVER — Denver police say they are looking for two men who witnesses say were sitting in a car parked across from the home of slain Denver talk show host Alan Berg, shortly before Berg was gunned down in an ambush on the driveway of his residence.

One witness, neighbor Teresa Hughes, told police on Wednesday that two Caucasian men were sitting in the front seat of a dark blue or black domestic sedan three doors south of the slaying scene between 8:10 p.m. and 9:25 p.m. Monday.

Berg, 50, was found dead in the driveway of his rented condominium east of downtown Denver just after 9:30 p.m. Monday.

Lt. Lorne Johnson said a second witness told police that a similar car "almost ran over" her and a friend as it sped eastward on 16th Avenue at about 9:45 p.m. just around the corner from the slaying scene. That woman's name was not made public.

Police also said they are looking for a sandy-haired, 6-foot-tall man who is believed to have been walking near Berg's home at the time of the shooting. Detective Division Chief Don Mulnix said the man is not considered a suspect, but "may have been the closest to the scene of the crime."

Police have put 46 investigators on the case.

Berg — who billed himself as "the man you love to hate" — died in a hail of 45-caliber gunfire Monday night as he got out of his Volkswagen convertible after having dinner at a restaurant with his ex-wife, Judith.

Police say the gunman opened up from about 5 feet away. Mulnix said Wednesday the killer used an automatic weapon, but that it could have been one of 21 types of weapons. Shell casings found at the murder scene yielded no fingerprints, he said.

He said investigators were not ruling out the possibility Berg was murdered by someone offended by Berg's caustic style, which prompted a dozen or so listeners to write letters of complaint about him to the Federal Communications Commission in Washington over the past four years.

AP Laserphoto

Erin Sullivan, 8, of Denver, places flowers at the base of slain talk-show host Alan Berg's garage door. Several people have placed flowers and notes by the door to pay their respects. The note above her head reads: "Alan Berg, we love ya, may you rest in peace. P.S. Lord take care of him, love, us."

Berg had a 9 a.m. weekday talk show on KOA Radio, where he had worked since 1981. His trademark was a biting, often sarcastic repartee with listeners.

In 1979, while working for KWBZ, Berg claimed the head of the Colorado Ku Klux Klan threatened him on the air with a pistol. Fred Wilkins, the KKK official, denied he was armed or that any threat was made. Wilkins and Berg settled the matter out of court.

Berg also periodically reported death threats to the police.

"He routinely got death threats in the mail and on the phone. It was just part of his life," said KOA News Director Mark Warren, but he said the last one he could recall was in January.

Wire check

Sentinel wire services

La Salle

Crew searches for gas leak source

An oil rig crew on Wednesday lowered pipe into the abandoned water well where officials say they may find the source of escaping natural gas. Gas was discovered Sunday flowing from the well beneath a downtown water tower. Officials plan to perform tests this week deep inside the well.

Mayor Bruce Kanada on Wednesday said a reduced flow of gas from the well in the past 24 hours supports his theory the gas has migrated into town water wells from a nearby gas well that is leaking or was drilled improperly.

Thomas B. Majors, owner of the Berthoud consulting firm attempting to solve the gas mystery, said he hopes tests may be conducted Thursday.

Littleton

Carlson mental treatment ordered

Ross Carlson is mentally unable to assist with a defense against charges that he murdered his parents, a judge ruled today. Former Colorado Supreme Court Justice Edward C. Day ruled after 11 days of hearings in which psychologists and psychiatrists argued over whether Carlson has several personalities, each of which acts independently from the others.

Day said today the preponderance of evidence shows Carlson has a "multiple personality disorder." Because of today's ruling, Carlson, 20, will be treated in a mental institution until he is determined competent to help with his defense. Carlson has pleaded innocent by reason of insanity to the two first-degree murder charges resulting from last August's shooting deaths of Rod and Marilyn Carlson, both 37.

Denver

Officials retain Cusack belongings

Relatives and business associates of a University of Colorado professor who was shot to death in Bolivia June 3 say they want to know why more than $1,000 and other effects belonging to the late David Cusack have not been returned to the United States.

Cusack, 40, an agronomist and part-time professor of political science at CU, was shot fatally in the back June 3 while visiting an archaeological site high in the Bolivian Andes. American Embassy officials in LaPaz speculated at the time that Cusack was shot during a botched robbery. Cusack's body was returned to Colorado for burial June 9.

Dems name convention reps

Several Colorado officials and delegates will serve on Democratic National Convention committees in San Francisco July 16-19, Democratic state Chairman Floyd Ciruli has announced.

Denver Mayor Federico Pena and U.S. Rep. Pat Schroeder will be members of the committee on rules, and Gov. Richard Lamm will serve on the credentials committee. State Sen. Polly Baca, vice chairwoman of the Democratic National Committee, is co-chairwoman of the rules committee. All were selected by Charles Manatt, national Democratic chairman.

Ciruli will serve as the delegation chairman, with Lamm and Schroeder as honorary co-chairmen. Mike Stratton, who is U.S. Sen. Gary Hart's campaign coordinator for Colorado, was chosen vice chairman.

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Colorado's anti-MX suit moved

Associated Press

DENVER — A U.S. district court judge in Denver has moved a Colorado lawsuit challenging placement of MX missiles in Wyoming and Nebraska to a federal court in Nebraska.

U.S. District Judge John Kane, Jr. moved the lawsuit on Wednesday. Kane ruled that the suit, filed April 20 by Gov. Richard Lamm, the city of Denver and several cities in northern Colorado, is very similar to a case filed one day earlier in Nebraska by a coalition of MX opponents called Western Solidarity.

The Colorado officials' lawsuit seeks a block in the installation of MX missiles in Wyoming and Nebraska until the Air Force gives further study to possible environmental consequences of that placement in neighboring Colorado.

"Virtually all of the issues raised in (Colorado's) case are at issue in Western Solidarity, and both cases seek similar relief against the same defendants," Kane said.

He added that the Colorado case should be heard in the same court where the first complaint was filed. Federal lawyers from Denver and Washington had called for the suit to be moved to Nebraska.

Both lawsuits claim that the Department of Defense's environmental impact statements fail to adequately address the effects of installing MX missiles. The Colorado lawsuit also said hearings should have been held to determine the effect of the missile installation on Colorado land, water and air.

Lawrence LeClair, an assistant Colorado attorney general, said the state may ask Kane to reconsider his ruling.

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