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The Rockies

Murder charges considered in Berg case

Associated Press

DENVER — Racketeering indictments expected in Seattle Monday could pave the way for first-degree murder charges in Denver against the alleged killers of talk show host Alan Berg, but Denver police say no decision has been made yet.

"I'm not sure we're interested in filing charges. We're not sure who their (FBI's) witnesses are," said Don Mulnix, Denver police chief of investigations.

He said Friday that after the racketeering charges are filed, his detectives will sit down with federal agents to determine whether a murder case should be presented to the Denver district attorney's office. "We're none time away from that," he said.

Federal agents, in developing their racketeering case, might have enough evidence to allow murder charges to be filed in Denver against members of the neo-Nazi group known as The Order.

If they make the Berg case a cornerstone of the federal indictment, federal prosecutors must convince a jury "beyond a reasonable doubt" that those named actually committed the crime.

Since that is the same level of proof needed for a first-degree murder charge, the information developed by the federal government could pave the way for local charges, officials say.

Denver police and prosecutors are expected to receive the information developed during the federal investigation after the expected disclosure of the indictment on Monday. So far, local police have taken a backseat to the FBI in the investigation.

Federal agents have developed a series of informants inside The Order and they allegedly have implicated fellow members in the June 18 murder of Berg, who was Jewish.

Under racketeering laws, a person can be sentenced to 20 years in prison if he committed two serious crimes while a member of an organization engaged in racketeering activities.

Federal officials have no shortage of alleged crimes to choose from when putting together a racketeering case against The Order, which has been linked to armored car robberies.

Stonecutter carves Indian sculpture

During snow, rain he creates Niwot bust

Associated Press

BOULDER — If you talk to Thomas Meagher-Miller long enough, you'll get the impression that this man is possessed.

Who wouldn't be, after hacking and molding a stone in the rain and snow for four long, cold months?

Meagher-Miller is a stonecutter on a mission to bring out the spirit and image of Chief Niwot from a 2,500-pound chunk of Lyons sandstone.

Since October, Meagher-Miller, 25, has worked nearly every day by the 9th Street bridge along Boulder Creek to perfect an image of the Indian who first welcomed whites to the Boulder Valley in the 1850s.

Meagher-Miller's creation is almost finished, and a group of Boulder art lovers want the piece to stay in Boulder. When Meagher-Miller went to the city seeking funds for the project, however, he was turned down.

The Citizens Art Committee is trying to raise $12,500 to buy the work and donate it to the city. Meagher-Miller has an offer on the bust from a Denver man, but locals want the image of Boulder's famous chief to stay in the land he called home.

The local art group has until April 30 to raise the money.

From Meagher-Miller's perspective, the matter is up to fate, or the Chief's will.

"He chose me to cut the stone and he is in charge — he will find a home," Meagher-Miller said.

The entire event was meant to happen, the artist said. The stone he is working on originally stood only 75 yards from the banks of Boulder Creek where Meagher-Miller now works.

AP Laserphoto

Thomas Meagher-Miller instantly knew a 2,500-pound chunk of Lyons sandstone should become the figure of Chief Niwot. The Indian welcomed white people to the Boulder area 130 years ago.

The sculptor started researching his creation before cutting into the stone. In his research, he found a benevolent, well-educated Indian leader.

Through winter and spring, Meagher-Miller has worked on Niwot in all kinds of weather.

Each day, many people come by and question the young artist about his work. "In November, on the 120th anniversary of the chief's death, I was here and it was a real intense day," said Meagher-Miller.

Wire check

Sentinel wire services

Denver

Loan loss would make history book

If Colorado National Bank doesn't recover $6 million lost in an alleged loan scam, it will be the biggest loan loss in the state's history, according to Banking Commissioner Richard Doby.

A New York grand jury has indicted John Grambling, the 34-year-old head of Grambling & Co. of Greenwich, Conn., on 13 counts of grand larceny, forgery, possession of forged documents and conspiracy. He pleaded innocent Thursday in New York Supreme Court.

Denver

Lawyers get new view of courtroom

Two Denver lawyers have been ordered to stand trial in connection with a case where driving license violations were removed from state records in return for cash.

Denver County Judge John Coughlin on Friday ordered Nick Avila to stand trial on two counts of forgery and two counts of criminal conspiracy. The judge also ordered Vincent Franco to be tried on two counts of forgery and three counts of criminal conspiracy.

Lawyers for both defendants argued there was no evidence that Avila or Franco bribed employees at the Motor Vehicles Division to delete traffic violations from department records.

The defense argued that any deletions from the records of the two lawyers' clients and associates were carried out by Motor Vehicles Division employees independently without Avila and Franco's knowledge.

Boulder

CU seeks to draw industry to school

The University of Colorado is examining a plan that calls for working with industry to develop a large research campus.

Under the proposal, major corporations interested in a joint venture with CU would be invited to build on a 200-acre site on the east campus.

"This is not an industrial park," said Ted Tedesco, CU's vice chancellor for administration. "We want to develop partnerships with private corporations, both for research and for development of the products that research may generate."

Front Range may be losing strength as a population magnet

Associated Press

DENVER — Colorado still is a good place to live, but projected runaway population growth along the Front Range may not occur, says Gov. Richard Lamm.

"We've been talking about adding 1.2 million more people to the Front Range by the year 2000, and all of a sudden our projections may be off 25 percent," Lamm said after a speech to the Colorado City Managers Association.

"That's 300,000 (fewer) people. What that would do to our planning and infrastructure would be like trying to change a tire on a car that is going 80 miles an hour."

Lamm said recent demographic and economic shifts show Colorado may not be the magnet it has been in the past. Among them:

- As Eastern cities rebound, fewer people are leaving to look for jobs in the West and South.
- The nation is getting older, and fewer young people are hitting the road to start new lives.
- More people moved out of Colorado last year than moved into the state. Last year was the first time that has happened since the 1980s. Lamm said that is partly because some Colorado industries, including mining, tourism and agriculture, have slowed, and new ones are not as interested in coming into Colorado.

Most of Lamm's comments were based on recent work by Reid Reynolds, state demographer.

Reynolds said that between 1970 and 1983, an average of 43,000 more people a year moved into Colorado than moved out of it. However, preliminary figures show that last year, about 1,000 more people left Colorado than moved here.

"We've had such a long period of rapid growth in this state that it has led to a tacit assumption ... that we will continue that rapid growth."

Maybe that should be examined, he said.

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