

HATE.



A COMPILATION OF VIOLENT CRIMES COMMITTED AGAINST HOMELESS PEOPLE IN THE U.S. IN 2001

*Prepared by the National Homeless Civil Rights Organizing Project
A project of the National Coalition for the Homeless*

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Cover Photo: Ricky White, 45, was followed down an alley by a group of teens in Galveston, Texas and hit in the back of the head with a hard object. See entry: June 2001-- Galveston, Texas. Photo courtesy of: The Daily News, Galveston County (7/1/02).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Summary of Hate Crimes/Violence Data	4
Recommendations for Actions	5
Case Descriptions by Month and City	6
Call on Congress for a GAO Report on Hate Crimes and Violence Committed Towards People Experiencing Homelessness: Organizational Endorsement Form	27

INTRODUCTION

The June killing of Hector Robles in Paterson, NJ by a mob of high school boys saturated front pages and evening news reports with its horrid brutality and inexplicable motivation. Hidden from most living rooms, however, were a number of other shocking crimes committed nationwide against homeless people this year. A 22-year-old woman was stabbed almost 15 times and thrown into the Charles River in Cambridge, MA. A man was drenched with gasoline and set on fire in New York City. An army veteran in Ventura, CA, was beaten to death while resting in his sleeping bag.

The continual size of reports of hate crimes and violence against people experiencing homelessness has led the National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH) to publish its third consecutive report, *Hate. A Compilation of Violent Crimes Committed Against Homeless People in the U.S. in 2001*. Over the past several years, advocates and homeless shelter workers from around the country have seen an alarming increase in reports of homeless men, women and even children being killed, beaten, and harassed. In 1999, NCH, along with its Civil Rights Work Group, a nationwide network of civil rights and homeless advocates, responded to this concern and produced the first compilation of its kind, *No More Homeless Deaths! Hate Crimes: A Report Documenting Violence Against Men and Women Homeless in the U.S.* The following year, NCH published *A Report of Hate Crimes and Violence Against People Who Are Homeless in the United States in 2000*. These reports present the known incidences of hate crimes and violence against the homeless population. These annual reports aim:

1. To compile the incidence of hate crimes and against people who are homeless that NCH has received and reviewed in order to document this alarming trend.
2. To make lawmakers and the public aware of this serious trend.
3. To recommend proactive measures to be taken.

The term “hate crime” generally conjures up images of cross burnings and lynchings, swastikas on Jewish synagogues, and horrific murders of gays and lesbians. In 1968, the U.S. Congress defined a hate crime as a crime in which the defendant intentionally selects a victim, or in the case of a property crime, the property that is the object of the crime, because of their race, color or national origin (Title 18 U.S.C Section 245). The first federal law to combat hate crimes, 18 USC Section 245, passed in 1968; it mandated that the government must prove both that the crime occurred because of a victim’s membership in a designated group and because the victim was engaged in certain specified federally-protected activities -- such as serving on a jury, voting, or attending public school.¹

Federal bias crime laws enacted subsequently have provided additional coverage. The Hate Crimes Statistics Act of 1990 (HCSA) mandates the Justice Department to collect data from law enforcement agencies about crimes that “manifest evidence of prejudice based upon race, religion, sexual orientation, or ethnicity.”² The Hate Crimes Sentencing Enhancement Act, enacted as a section of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, defines hate crimes as “a crime in which the defendant intentionally selects a victim, or in the case of

¹ Source: Anti-Defamation League, http://www.adl.org/legislative_action/hatecrimes_briefing.html

² Source: Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, www.civilrights.org

a property crime, the property that is the object of the crime, because of the actual or perceived race, color, national origin, ethnicity, gender, disability, or sexual orientation of any person.” This measure only applies to, inter alia, attacks and vandalism which occur in national parks and on federal property.³

The most recent piece of legislation, Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act (H.R. 1343, S. 625), stands to strengthen existing federal hate crime laws in two ways. First, it would expand the current law to reach all the cases where individuals kill or injure others because of bias against religion, color, national origin or race. Second, it would expand the Department of Justice’s ability to prosecute individuals who commit violent crimes against individuals because of their gender, disability, or sexual orientation. There is currently no federal criminal prohibition against violent crimes directed at individuals because of their *housing status*.

H.R. 1343/S. 625 currently has broad bipartisan support, with 250 co-sponsors in the House and 51 co-sponsors in the Senate. The National Coalition for the Homeless aims to include *housing status* in the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act and in future pieces of legislation. By including *housing status*, hate crimes and violent acts towards people experiencing homelessness will be more appropriately handled and prosecuted. Additionally, if victims know that a system is in place to prosecute such crimes, they are more likely to come forward to report these crimes. People who are forced to live and sleep on the streets for lack of an appropriate alternative are in an extremely vulnerable situation, and it is unacceptable that they are not protected by hate crime prevention laws.

Hate crimes are commonly called bias-motivated crimes, referring to the prejudice or partiality of the perpetrator against the victim’s real or perceived grouping or circumstance. Most hate crimes are committed not by organized hate groups, but by individual citizens who harbor a strong resentment against a certain group of people. Some are “mission offenders,” who believe they are on a mission to cleanse the world of a particular evil. Others are “scapegoat offenders,” who project their resentment toward the growing economic power of a particular racial or ethnic group through violent actions. Still others are “thrill seekers”—those who take advantage of a vulnerable and disadvantaged group in order to satisfy their own pleasures.⁴ Thrill seekers, primarily in their teens, are the most common perpetrators of violence against the homeless population.

The National Coalition for the Homeless relies on news reports and homeless shelters around the country for the data and documentation that it includes in its reports. Although NCH acts as the nationwide repository of hate crimes/violence against homeless people, there is no systematic method of collecting and documenting such reports. Many of these violent acts go unpublicized and/or unreported, thereby making it difficult to assess the true situation. Often, homeless people do not report crimes committed against them because of mental health issues, substance abuse, fear of retaliation, past incidents, or frustration with police. Many cases this year were also omitted because the victims were found beaten to death, but no suspects could be identified. In addition, the report does not take into account the large number of sexual assaults, especially on homeless women.

³ Source: Anti-Defamation League, http://www.adl.org/legislative_action/hatecrimes_briefing.html

⁴ Source: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, www.ojp.usdoj.gov

The Hate Crimes Statistics Act of 1990 mandates the Justice Department to collect data on hate crimes, but limits this to “crimes that manifest evidence of prejudice based on race, religion, sexual orientation or ethnicity.”⁵ The National Coalition for the Homeless urges the U.S. Department of Justice to maintain a database that addresses the issues of violence against the homeless population to better identify this growing trend.

A main objective of this report is to educate lawmakers, advocates, and the general public about the problem of hate crimes and violence against people who are homeless in order to instigate change and ensure protection of civil rights for everyone, regardless of their economic circumstances or housing status. As part of its mission, National Coalition for the Homeless is committed to creating the systemic and attitudinal changes necessary to end homelessness. A major component of these changes must include the societal guarantee of safety and protection and a commitment by lawmakers to combat violent acts and hate crimes against people who experience homelessness.

⁵ Source: Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, www.civilrights.org

SUMMARY OF HATE CRIMES/VIOLENCE DATA

Total Number of Deaths in 2001: 18

Total Number of Victims Who Suffered Non-Lethal Violence: 61

Number of Cities Where Crimes Occurred: 29

Cities Where Crimes Occurred:

Albany, NY	Las Vegas, NV
Arlington, VA	Los Angeles, CA
Aurora, IL	Louisville, KY
Baltimore, MD	Paterson, NJ
Bayamon, Puerto Rico	New York, NY
Bremerton, WA	Sacramento, CA
Cambridge, MA	San Diego, CA
Cincinnati, OH	Santa Fe, NM
Covington, KY	Santurce, Puerto Rico
Dale City, VA	Sarasota, FL
Fort Lauderdale, FL	Spokane, WA
Fort Worth, TX	Superior, WI
Galveston, TX	Tacoma, WA
Hayward, CA	Ventura, CA
Kansas City, KS	

**Known Ages of Accused/
Convicted** 14 (five), 15 (eleven), 16 (six), 17 (thirteen), 18
(six), 19 (four), 21 (two), 22, 23 (two), 25 (two), 26, 27 (two)
28, 32, 39

Known Ages of Victims: 22, 23, 24, 29, 31, 35, 36, 37 (two), 39 (two), 40, 42
(four), 45, 46, 47 (three), 50, 52 (two), 53, 54 (two), 55
(two), 58, 74

Gender of Victims: Male 50
Female 4

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTIONS

National Coalition for the Homeless recommends that the following actions be taken:

1. A public statement by the U.S. Department of Justice acknowledging that hate crimes and/or violence against people experiencing homelessness is a serious national trend.
2. A database to be maintained by the U.S. Department of Justice, in cooperation with the National Coalition for the Homeless, to track hate crimes and/or violence against people who become homeless.
3. Inclusion of housing status in the pending federal hate crimes legislation, the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2001(H.R. 1343, S. 625).
4. Sensitivity training at police academies and departments nationwide for trainees and police officers on how to deal effectively and humanely with people who become homeless in their communities.
5. A General Accounting Office (GAO) investigation into the nature and scope of hate crimes and/or violent acts and crimes that occur against people experiencing homelessness. The study will address the following: causes of hate crimes/violence, circumstances that contribute to or were responsible for the perpetrators' behavior, beliefs held by the perpetrators of these crimes and how their beliefs have changed since conviction, and thoughts and advice to others who are considering hate crimes/violence against the homeless population.

CASE DESCRIPTIONS BY MONTH AND CITY

Hate Crimes and Violence Against Homeless People in 2001

JANUARY

Los Angeles, California

Man dies from fight with agency guards

Lionel Ricardo Berry, a 39-year-old transient, died after a struggle with three security guards at one of the city's largest homeless services. The coroner's office ruled his death a homicide from asphyxiation and attributed his injuries to the guards' "restraint maneuvers."

One witness said that the guards tackled Berry, and then, as he lay face down on the ground, one knelt on his neck. A wrongful death suit filed by Berry's family claims that the guards held him in a "violent" chokehold. Some witnesses said that Berry exhibited erratic behavior after he was asked to leave a cafe at the Weingart Center. Others said that he left quietly, and that the guards' actions were unprovoked.

Also in the lawsuit, it is alleged that the three guards beat and restrained him without cause and then refused to release him despite complaints that he couldn't breathe.

The civil suit, filed in April, claims that the guards placed their knees on the 39-year-old Berry's neck while he was lying on the ground and further cut off his airway by placing him in a violent chokehold.

The guards in the case have not been publicly identified. Two are Weingart employees, who were suspended from duty in response to preliminary reports about the cause of death. A third Pinkerton guard has been reassigned elsewhere.

His death raises concerns over the training and use of security personnel at social service agencies. Though the Weingart Center has been recognized for many of its programs, it also has acquired a reputation for its aggressive security force.

Other homeless agencies acknowledge that they have heard frequent complaints about Weingart security personnel manhandling or verbally berating street people. "They have a reputation of being goons," said an agency head who requested anonymity.

Charles "Bud" Hayes, executive director of the SRO Housing Corporation, which operates low-cost housing downtown, said the Weingart incident has caused much anguish. Hayes said he initiated a new training course for his own in-house security after observing "blatant violations of constitutional rights" meted out to homeless people by area businesses' private security guards one day.

Other organizations have responded to the incident by initiating training courses and sensitivity workshops for their own security staff.

MARCH

Baltimore, Maryland

Man killed with baseball bat

On March 18, George D. Williams, 46, was beaten and pushed from the top of an old warehouse where he slept. Three months later, police still had no suspects.

However, the June 16 killing of Harry Lawhorn led them to three teenagers: Mike Farmer (17), Harold Waterbury (17), and Daniel Ennis Jr. (16). Farmer, a high-school dropout, had come recently from Kansas to the streets of Baltimore. Waterbury and Ennis, who often skipped classes, both lived in the neighborhood.

The group had discovered the homeless encampments along the South Baltimore railroad tracks while taking a shortcut to an aunt's house. Farmer had bragged to his girlfriend about "bum stomping," the detectives said.

Farmer and Waterbury are being charged for first-degree murder.

Bayamon, Puerto Rico

Four homeless men allegedly abused by police

Four homeless men received blows from the municipal police's hands, according to Lt. Rafael Caseres Acosta, District Commander. One was hit in the mouth with a portable radio.

The police hit and forcibly removed them from the city, said Wilfredo Castillo, 23, Victor Cruz, 29, Pedro Rivera, 40, and Jose Otero, 31, leaving them stranded on Highway 188 in front of the Jardines de Loiza Pharmacy.

Mayor Ramon Luis Rivera denied the charges, saying Bayamon Municipal Police officers have started picking up homeless people, but only to offer them services, such as taking them to shelters.

"Reports saying that municipal police have hit anyone are incorrect," he said. "These people are exaggerating."

Spokane, Washington

Man repeatedly hit with metal pole

To conclude his 21st birthday celebration, Justin White and his friend, Jonathan Michel, beat a homeless man over a dozen times with a 7 foot, 10 pound pole. Rick Rice had been sleeping, trying to keep warm under a blanket beneath the overpass of Interstate 90, when he was attacked and killed.

Police and witnesses say White wanted to end a night of celebrating his 21st birthday with a fight. Police say he and Michel headed home drunk from a downtown bar and grabbed a metal pipe in front of the Davenport Hotel.

Michel said he watched White smash Rice five times on the head with the pipe before lifting the blanket to see what he had done.

White pulled the cover back over Rice's head, hitting him another half-dozen times, Michel said.

Rice had been assaulted a week earlier by the men with a 40-ounce bottle, a rock, and a 2 x 4 pole.

White and Michel, who met in drug treatment, discussed the attack beforehand and took turns striking Rice, court papers say.

After White and Michel were arrested, White told investigators he didn't mean to murder Rice.

Spokane County Judge Kathleen O'Connor agreed with deputy prosecutor Shane Smith that the exceptional sentence of 40 years given to White was warranted because of Rice's vulnerability. "One, he (Rice) was on the streets, Two, he was asleep," Smith said. "There's case law that supports an exceptional sentence when a victim can't flee or call for help."

Michel, 26, is also being charged for first-degree murder.

Superior, Wisconsin ***Man beaten outside apartment***

Michael Shaul, a 52-year-old Vietnam veteran, was beaten outside an apartment building, where he often slept to keep warm. A large amount of blood and hair was also found in the area.

Shaul's face was bruised, bloody and swollen beyond recognition. He suffered a broken jaw, punctured lung, broken ribs, chest bruises, and blunt trauma to the face. He remained in the hospital for a few weeks and underwent reconstructive facial surgery.

Twenty-one-year-old John Jeffrey Doolittle, who lived in the apartment building and had reported finding Shaul, was charged with felony battery.

Doolittle had been the Superior Police Department's leading suspect in the assault ever since he reported finding a bloodied and beaten man behind his apartment building.

Police investigators found that Shaul had been seen in the apartment building at 2 a.m., sleeping on a bucket in the hallway outside Doolittle's apartment. Superior Police Captain Charles LaGessee said, "He spent many nights in hallways of apartment buildings and wherever he could get heat."

About 2:30 a.m., a tenant heard voices in the hallway: A man asked: "What are you doing here?" Another man, believed to be Shaul, said: "Came in to warm up or sleep."

APRIL

Baltimore, Maryland

Man beaten to death with metal pipe

Entering the remote realm of South Baltimore's railroad tracks, police crossed a steep embankment and arrived at a low bridge. As if asleep, a man wrapped in a blanket rested on his side. He was Gerald J. Holle, 55, dead.

On April 24, Holle was beaten with a metal pipe. He became the second homeless person killed in the area. One more homicide would occur before the criminals were identified.

"The land that time forgot," as Sergeant Ernest Anderson called the area, contains homeless people different than those on the streets of Baltimore. Generally, they are older and possess independent living skills. About 65 to 70 people, mostly men, build encampments and survive off of fish and odd jobs.

Farmer, 17, Waterbury, 17, and Ennis, 16, have been charged in Holle's murder.

Bremerton, Washington

Seventy-four-year-old man dies from attack

Walter Jackson, a 74-year-old homeless veteran, died from blunt-force injuries to the head. He was attacked while walking in downtown Bremerton and was found unconscious and bleeding.

"He was a smiley, friendly guy," said St. Martin de Porres Shelter director Bob Goetschius. "It's a tragic thing to see this happen."

Police are seeking two men in the beating and robbery. They suspect younger men, said Goetschius.

Las Vegas, Nevada

Second man falls victim to "bum bashing"

In the city's second incident in recent weeks, a homeless man was beaten by a group of teenagers and left to die in a vacant lot. He died from "massive blunt-force trauma," according to the county coroner.

An autopsy detected broken bones throughout the victim's face, including multiple fractures of both the nose and jaw. Bruises and tears were found on the brain, and brain matter oozed from the skull.

Deputy District Attorney Michael O'Callaghan said that "the victim's death probably came from a big piece of concrete that was out there."

Russell “Rusty” Frasher, 50, had suffered repeated injuries during the last month, likely caused by the same perpetrators. On March 12, he went to the University Medical Center after having been beaten by three or four teenagers.

One of Rusty’s acquaintances, Deanna Sawyer, could find no reason for the attack. Rusty told her he believed it was the same teen-agers involved each time. She said Rusty didn’t know the boys or what reason they had for attacking him. “They knocked the sense out of him each time,” she said.

“I have a 15-month-old son and [Rusty] would often give him toys that he picked up,” said Deanna Sawyer. “He was one of the nicest, sweetest people you’ve met.”

Frasher served two tours of duty in Vietnam and worked as a coal miner in West Virginia, Ohio and Pennsylvania before moving to Las Vegas in the 1970’s.

Eighteen-year-old Anthony Quickbear and 17-year-olds Edward Hayes, Rocky Arbaugh, and Donald Jones have pleaded guilty. One was said to have been wearing a long, white robe at the time of the crime.

When the suspects were asked by police why they had carried out the beating, they came up with responses such as “we were drunk,” “I don’t know,” and “I only stomped on his head 10 or 12 times.”

In Arbaugh’s confession to the police, “He advised that he hit the homeless man numerous times and threw a shopping cart on him,” and that “His actions may have resulted in his death.”

In Quickbear’s confession, “He advised that he hit, kicked and jumped up and down on the man. He also advised that he hit the man with a shopping cart and then jumped up and down on the shopping cart.”

Edward Hayes told police that, prior to Frasher’s death, the group beat another homeless man.

Homicide Detective Roy Chandler wrote, “I believe that the above listed suspects have been involved in the beatings of the homeless for quite some time.”

Police say five to six other homeless men have been beaten since early March in the desert area where Frasher was killed.

Several of those victims, including the one who was pummeled by a group of youths and hospitalized about four hours before Frasher was slain, have given authorities descriptions of their assailants matching those of the four youths taken into custody.

“We don’t know how many incidents these kids were involved in,” said Homicide Lt. Wayne Petersen. “But it appears there may have been other incidents that have not been reported.... The investigation is ongoing.”

Alondra Smith, program coordinator with the MASH Village, said the recent killings are particularly worrisome to older homeless people. “These young people are preying on the weak,” Smith said.

Bryan Noah, a homeless man and editor of the local street newspaper, “The Voice,” said he hasn’t heard much concern expressed by other homeless people over the recent slayings. He said violence is just one of a number of fears and problems they have to deal with every day.

Local and national advocates worry about a new trend of “bum bashing” or “troll-busting.” In these instances, gangs, usually consisting of younger people, commit crimes against homeless people with little motive aside from thrill or contempt.

Santurce, Puerto Rico

Man allegedly hit by security guard

Arturo Aponte, a homeless man who might have acted aggressively toward people on the street who had refused to give him money, said that he was hit by a security guard.

The police did nothing to stop the guard, said Roberto Delgado, a witness who intervened in the situation.

Aponte, 53, suffered a hematoma in his head and was taken to the hospital. Oscar Calderon, 28, is being investigated.

MAY

Albany, New York

Two young men charged with assault

A homeless man was attacked outside a Madison Avenue bar on May 24.

Michael Deperna, 22, and Sonny Chawla, 16, are being charged for felony assault.

Arlington, Virginia

Drifters brutally beat and jump on man

Edgar Roldan, 54, was found battered, naked, and dead in a small park across from the Rosslyn Metrorail station. He suffered ten broken ribs and several head injuries.

Two 19-year-old drifters, Anthony Accardi and William Talbot, were charged with his murder. In a taped statement, Accardi confessed his involvement in the Memorial Day attack.

Accardi said he first became annoyed at Roldan because he was talking in his sleep. He shoved Roldan, and took the change that fell from his pocket. Later, Accardi and Talbot encountered Roldan again. They hit and kicked him, and Talbot stripped the man down to his socks, according to Accardi. Talbot threw the clothes in a garbage can.

With one foot, Accardi jumped from the stairs onto Roldan's stomach "right where the soft part is," he said.

Using a black magic marker, Accardi said, he wrote his nickname "VIK" across Roldan's chest. These gang "tags" are similar to markings around the Metro station, said the Arlington police.

Some witnesses said that the fight was caused by Roldan's failure to provide the alcohol the teenagers had wanted him to buy. Instead, Roldan drank it himself. Accardi's attorney disputes the murder charge by citing Roldan's high .39 percent blood-alcohol level. He argues that his client was involved in the beating of Roldan, but not killing him.

The homeless community helped in making the two arrests, according to the police. In the area, many people knew Roldan well. He slept at the station almost everyday.

The Arlington police picked up Accardi and Talbot at the Greyhound bus terminal in nearby Washington, DC. The pair, along with Accardi's fiancée, had tickets to Florida.

New York, New York

Man allegedly torched and killed by teens

Three teenagers allegedly set fire to a homeless man because he did not apologize for bumping into them. The boys found the man asleep under the stairs and twice torched him with a page ripped from a calendar.

One teen told the judge he served as lookout while his teen buddies set Walter Eakman, age 47, afire because he failed to say “excuse me” after bumping into the boys outside the building.

Eakman died at the Cornell Burn Center, with burns over 80 percent of his body. Known as “Bigheaded Mike,” Eakman was missed by many residents of his community and Chelsea House, the place he often slept. The neighborhood took up a collection for his burial charges.

Luis Medina, 16, and Robert Velasquez, 14, pleaded guilty to manslaughter; Jario Gil, 15, pleaded guilty to murder.

Clyde Kuemmerle, outreach program coordinator at the Holy Apostles Soup Kitchen, where Eakman was a regular, said that Eakman was not the first homeless man set on fire in Chelsea in recent months.

“I think it’s a sign of the times – incredible cruelty against an easy target,” he said.

“He never did anything wrong to anyone,” said Carlos Vega. “He never disrespected anybody. He was loved by the whole community.”

Tacoma, WA

Teens engage in random attack

A 36-year-old transient man was beaten by four teenagers in Wright Park. He was taken to Tacoma General Hospital where he was unconscious and in critical condition. The attack was random, police believe.

JUNE

Albany, New York

Man suffered shattered jaw

On June 14, a 42-year-old resident of the Homeless Action Committee shelter was attacked by several young men, authorities believe. He suffered severe head injuries and a shattered jaw, and his bleeding left a trail of several blocks.

“His head looked like the Elephant Man’s,” said Chrys Ballerano, a former program assistant at the shelter. “It was just horrible.”

He was taken to Albany Medical Center Hospital, where he remained in critical condition for several days.

Albany police said such attacks on homeless people and alcoholics are not uncommon. The attacks often increase during the warmer months when more young people tend to roam the streets, especially at night.

Albany, New York

Attacks on homeless increase

In the last few months, groups of young men have continually assaulted people living on the streets. In the latest incident, four males approached a man named Chuck while he sat on a bench. They knocked him to the ground and beat him.

Chuck’s baseball hat, clothes and sneakers were still covered in blood when he sat in a chair at the shelter and recounted the assault. He said he heard four young men coming around a corner as he sat on a bench around 3 a.m. He tried to run, but they knocked him to the ground and began beating him.

“They had rocks in their hands and they just started hitting me,” said Chuck. “This went on about 20 seconds, and then they decided they’d had enough. ... This is the third time this has happened to me.” He had to get several stitches in his forehead following the attack.

Baltimore, Maryland

Third homicide leads to arrest of teenage suspects

In South Baltimore, 47-year-old Harry Lawhorn was attacked, beaten with fists, and kicked until his death. He suffered a broken spine and “some of the most horrendous head injuries,” said Detective William Ritz.

Lawhorn was the third man found beaten to death this spring near the South Baltimore railroad tracks. At least five other homeless men were viciously assaulted, but survived.

“These guys weren’t bothering anyone,” Detective Mike Glenn said. “These men suffered,” Glenn said. “It wasn’t a one-whack or two-whack kind of beating.”

After Lawhorn's death, the men living in the woods, many of them avowed loners, huddled together at night and rigged up alarms out of tin cans and string.

But the men knew one thing: They weren't assaulted by one of their own. One victim described white males who looked like they came from the nearby neighborhood.

This time, the perpetrators were found. Farmer, 17, Waterbury, 17, and Ennis, 16, were charged as adults for the previous homicides, and Waterbury was charged for Lawhorn's death.

They were neighborhood kids who knew well the nooks and crannies of Baltimore.

"They would strategize," Sgt. Ernest Anderson said, explaining how one assailant might be assigned to approach from the rear while another was supposed to be the distraction.

Of the assailants, Sgt. Anderson said, "It was like they were creeping up on baby seals."

The teenagers' motives are uncertain. They claimed that they engaged in crime for robbery of the little money they found. Others said that the teenagers wanted to rid South Baltimore of homeless people.

"I became very concerned that we had someone or someones doing this just for the hell of it," said Lt. Richard Fahlteich. "Because what are you going to rob from a homeless person?"

"They did it because they really enjoyed it," Sgt. Anderson said. "They did it for the pure sport of it. They did it because they could."

Fort Lauderdale, Florida

White female severely burned

Sharee Frazer, a homeless woman, was found with critical burns on the front of her body on June 18. She was taken to Broward General Medical Center, where she later died.

Frazer, 42, said that she was thrown from a car by a male driver, and "he set me on fire." Currently, no witnesses to the incident exist.

Galveston, Texas

Man attacked for few dollars

Outside a burger place, a homeless man in his mid-50's called "Joe" was knocked down with a blow to the back of his head, kicked in the face, and hit on the head by some male teenagers who wanted to rob him. He suffered a black eye and other pains.

Homeless advocates said that Joe's case was a common occurrence. The predators had to have known their victim had, at most, a few bucks in his pockets.

Likewise, the victims often share similar traits. Many victims are passive and retreating, not prone to aggressive panhandling, drug use, or even extraneous human contact," said Ted

Hanley, executive director of Jesse Tree, a hub for social services in the county. Some suffer from mental illnesses, others from learning disabilities, and are more vulnerable because of them.

Galveston, Texas **Teenagers stalk and beat man**

Ricky White*, 45, was followed down an alley and hit in the back of the head with a hard object. The teenage attackers left without taking anything “because I didn’t have nothing,” said White.

White was treated at the University of Texas Medical Branch, where he had a blood clot removed from inside his skull.

White has lived on and off the streets for the last 15 years.

“The level of cruelty in beating someone like this is pretty scary,” said Ted Hanley, executive director of Jesse Tree, a hub for social services in the county.

Hanley told about a homeless man who showed up at a medical clinic in early June. The man claim to have been attacked just as White had and was bleeding from his ears, a possible sign of a serious head injury. Police have no report on the assault.

**Note: White is the man pictured on the cover.*

Las Vegas, Nevada **Another act of violence against the homeless**

Three men attacked and robbed 55-year-old Robert “Red” Broadhead, said Las Vegas police officer Kendall Wiley. Broadhead had been walking from the encampments that he had been forced to leave earlier when he was brutally beaten with metal pipes.

Wiley said the attackers tore Broadhead’s pants pockets, where he might have kept money he made as a day laborer.

Broadhead was treated at University Medical Center for a broken nose, cheekbone, and jaw. The incident occurred soon after a beating death of a homeless man, at least the fifth homicide of a homeless person in Las Vegas this year.

The homeless are easy prey for muggings and what has been called “bum-bashing” because crimes against the homeless often go unreported, Wiley said. “I guess they figure, who’s going to believe a homeless person?” he said.

Paterson, New Jersey **Thirteen youth face murder charges from “wilding” rampage**

Hector Robles was a homeless man who found a haven in a Paterson neighborhood. Factory workers offered him refuge in their plant. A school security guard left food outside for him. Youngsters gave him pocket change.

On the last day of school, a group of 15- to 17-year-old males paraded through the streets of Paterson, in search of a victim. They found one.

In broad daylight, the teenagers kicked, beat, and killed 42-year-old Robles, a homeless man sitting on a tire, drinking a beer. The boys allegedly attacked him on the street with their hands and feet and possibly a bottle. The prosecutor said the suspects “were going through his pockets, trying to see what they could get. Then, they went swimming and shopping downtown.

Witnesses said up to 20 kids were involved in the attack.

An employee at a neighborhood factory said he saw a throng of kids descend on Robles. The worker, who did not want to be named, said Robles did not fight back.

Witnesses also said that Robles got up and tried to walk away. “Let’s get him!” one teenager yelled, according to statements the suspects gave to police. Robles was knocked and repeatedly kicked and stomped, the suspects told police. A witness said someone yelled, “Blood! Blood!”

Another one of the suspects said that they kicked him “like a soccer ball”

“He was screaming, Oh! Oh! and moaning,” said Nathaniel Washington, a nearby shipping clerk.

Robles died from multiple blunt-force injuries to the torso, including a ruptured kidney and spleen.

Before coming to Robles, the group had already fought a student at school and beaten a deliveryman. One of the teens referred to the crimes as “playing tag”—street vernacular for hitting someone. They beat Robles “for no reason,” one boy told investigators. Their “wilding” rampage follows in the school’s history of year-end violence.

Seventeen-year-olds Anthony Wheeler, Steve Williams Jr., Freddy Riviera, Francisco Rodriguez, Sean Ferrar, Jawon White, Shohmahree Brown Parris, and 16-year-old Henry Robinson Jr. will be tried as adults. The five others, all 15 years old, will also be tried as adults. All face charges of capital murder, riot and robbery. If convicted of the most serious charge, they could face life in prison, said William Purdy, the prosecutor in charge of the case.

It’s really bothering me that this could happen to him, and in broad daylight,” said Glenn Urena, who runs an automobile dealership near where Robles was killed. “I’ve known him for 13 years. He was weak, and he was skinny, and he didn’t give anyone any trouble.”

“They kicked him like a dog,” said the man’s sister, Miriam Robles.

Robles was described as a well-liked and gentle man. “Everybody loved him, even the cops loved him,” said his brother-in-law, Raymond Pagan.

Sacramento, California

Teenagers pelt food at homeless

In a three-week series of attacks, a group of young men threw eggs, oranges, grapefruits, and water balloons at two dozen homeless people residing on the St. Francis church steps. The late evening drive-by strikes were accompanied by laughter and shouts of “You stinking bums.”

“They’re 18 or 19 years old,” said Gary Manes, who sleeps at the church steps. “They think it’s funny, but it’s very humiliating.”

To the homeless who congregate outside the church at K and 26th streets, the attacks are humiliating reminders that they are exposed not only to the elements of weather, but to reminders at practically every turn that they are scorned, even despised by many.

“We’re already out here. We’re already sleeping in a hard place,” said Elizabeth Marz, 56. “To be called a bum, I was mad. It’s a feeling of being powerless.” Marz was one of the homeless people who called 911.

Local homeless advocates say the hooliganism sends a warning that this could be a difficult, frustrating summer that local agencies and charities are ill-prepared to handle.

“The victims were afraid the ammunition might progress to rocks or guns. They were pretty scared,” said Paula Lomazzi of the Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee.

Bill Kennedy, managing attorney for the Sacramento Legal Services, says the public attitude these days is not only one of impatience but intolerance. The fruit-throwing teens are only the most blatant expression of anger and wrath.

San Diego, California

Man suffered head injuries from beating

A homeless man was treated for severe head injuries after being attacked by three men who fled in a Toyota Camry. The 1 a.m. assault left the man unconscious. No motive has been found.

Ventura, California

Homeless veteran killed “for fun”

James Richard Clark, a 58-year-old Army veteran, was beaten and stoned to death while he slept in his sleeping bag in the Ventura River bottom. He had lived there for almost two decades. Clark had become increasingly frail after getting hit by a car two years ago.

The murder “was basically for fun,” said Ventura Co. Deputy District Attorney Maeve Fox.

Eighteen-year-olds Robert Upton, Timothy Becker, and Christopher Dunham have been charged with murder and robbery. They will not face the death penalty, since the robbery has been deemed separate from the killing.

Rocky Mattley, 14, has also been charged with murder in juvenile court.

Authorities say the teenagers were partying near the beach when they came upon Clark and stole belongings from him. Later, authorities say, the three pelted Clark with rocks and kicked him repeatedly in the head as he lay in his sleeping bag.

Over 75 people attended the memorial service of this former sheet-metal worker, who was described as peaceful, humorous, and warm. He was a popular figure along Main Street and the beachfront. A group of surfers also held a tribute that drew a large crowd near the water's edge at Surfers Point.

JULY

Louisville, Kentucky

Two Homeless Men Attacked by Teenagers

A group of young teenagers beat two men, one of whom ended up in intensive care.

“We are concerned about what happens to our men on the streets,” said Sister Mary Kathleen Sheehan of St. John’s Center, a day center for homeless people.

AUGUST

Hayward, California

Woman slain in parking lot

Outside of the Quarter Pounder Hamburger restaurant, the beaten body of a homeless woman was found. A hammer was found near the crime scene. The suspect, 32-year-old Edward Britton, was arrested. He was seen leaving the parking lot in a Ford Aerostar van.

No motive has been determined.

Kansas City, Kansas

Liquor store employee charged with beating death

Joseph Perez, 23, allegedly punched, kicked, and stomped on 54-year-old Cecil Meadors after accusing him of shoplifting. A few hours later, Meadors was found in a homeless camp, dead of internal bleeding from an injury to his spleen.

Meadors had stolen a bag of ice from Grand Slam Liquors the week before, and was told not to return, according to Perez’ attorney. He came back, waving money to show he intended to pay. Perez told him to leave. Perez punched him once and kicked him to roll him out of the store.

Santa Fe, New Mexico

Man allegedly struck with skateboard

Two men beat a homeless man with a skateboard and club, the victim told police. He reported the incident from Café Oasis shortly after its occurrence.

Sarasota, Florida

Police seek suspect in beating of homeless man

While he was drinking with some friends, Damien Sanchez was approached by another man and then beaten by him. Sanchez, 39, was taken to Bayfront Medical Center, where he remained in critical condition.

The suspect is around 25 years old, about 5'8" tall, and around 180 pounds. He was wearing a white muscle shirt, shorts, and work boots and was driving a rust-colored or brown two-door Saturn, said witnesses.

Sarasota, Florida

Young teens abuse sleeping man

Five teenagers stoned and punched a homeless man who was sleeping in a bush, according to police. They also stole his bag.

Oscar Trevino, 15, Edgar Baltodano, 15, Mark Salvador, 15, and Brandon Clark, 14, have been charged with battery and strong-armed robbery. Juan Aguilar, 15, has been charged with strong-armed robbery. The teens were released from a Manatee County juvenile detention center back to their homes.

SEPTEMBER

Aurora, Illinois

Homeless man beaten and robbed

Lorne Russell, 39, and a second unidentified man allegedly approached a 47-year-old homeless man, brought him to a parking lot, and banged his head against a wall. He was treated for cuts on his head. Russell also took the man's wallet, which contained around \$450.

Russell has been charged with aggravated battery and robbery.

Dale City, Virginia

Two teenagers charged with killing man

After drinking with the man whom they had paid to buy them beer, William Taylor and Robert Wilkins got into an argument with him. They ended up beating 37-year-old Kevin Frock to death with branches, fists and feet.

At one point, authorities said, the teenagers left, then returned to get the rest of their money and beat Frock some more.

Taylor, 19, and Wilkins, 18, have been charged with murder.

"Homeless people are ready victims, and they normally are in secluded areas where they are subject to violence," said Commonwealth Attorney Paul Ebert.

Tacoma, Washington

Two transients allegedly assaulted by teens

Eight male teenagers allegedly assaulted two transients who were cooking dinner under the South 38th Street overpass. The teenagers asked for cigarettes, marijuana, and money and then punched and stabbed the 24-year-old and 42-year-old transients.

The 24-year-old, found unconscious, was taken to St. Joseph Medical Center. The 42-year-old received stitches on his cheek.

OCTOBER

Fort Worth, Texas

Bizarre Details of Man's Death Revealed

Hit-and-run victim lived for two days while trapped in windshield

When Gregory Glenn Biggs' body was found in October in Cobb Park, evidence pointed to a hit-and run.

But in early March of 2002, police learned that Biggs lived for two or three days after he was hit, lying on a car hood in a southeast Fort Worth garage, his body trapped in the windshield.

Despite Biggs' pleas, police said the driver refused to help and left him to die. Afterward, the body was dumped in the park.

"I'm going to have to come up with a new word. Indifferent isn't enough. Cruel isn't enough to say. Heartless? Inhumane? Maybe we've just redefined inhumanity here," said Richard Alpert, a Tarrant County assistant district attorney.

What happened to the 37-year-old Biggs, police said, was not a simple case of a driver's failure to stop to help an injured man. It was homicide, they said.

"If he had gotten medical attention, he probably would have survived," Sgt. John Fahrenthold said.

On March 8, 2002, police arrested Chante Mallard, a 25-year-old nurse's aid, basing their case primarily on Mallard's confession about four months later of what happened on an October night.

By Mallard's account, as told to police, she had been drinking and using Ecstasy that October night. In a police affidavit Mallard said she had only two drinks and believed someone had slipped something into her drink before she left a bar to drive home. She was driving home when she struck a man. The impact hurled him headfirst through the windshield, his broken legs protruding onto the hood.

She panicked, she said, and with the man lodged in the windshield, she drove a few miles to her home. There, she parked her car in the garage and lowered the door.

Biggs pleaded for help, she told police.

No help came. Not then, or for the next two or three days, as he remained lodged in the windshield, moaning, bleeding and slowly going into shock, police said.

Mallard told police she periodically went into the garage to check on the man. She said she apologized profusely to him for what she had done, but ignored cries for help.

According to a police affidavit, several months after the accident Mallard recounted to several women friends how she hit a man while driving under the influence of alcohol and ecstasy. Mallard giggled and remarked that after the accident she had sex with a friend at her home.

When the man died, several of the woman's acquaintances helped remove his body, putting it into the trunk of another car and driving to the park, where they dumped the body. Two men found the body on October 27, 2001.

On Feb. 26, 2002, police obtained a search warrant for Mallard's house. Inside her garage, they found the damaged car. Blood, hair and other trace evidence was found visible inside and outside the car. The car's seats had been removed and were found in the back yard, one of them burned.

Mallard was arrested for failure to stop and render aid and for murder. She faces from five years to life in prison and a fine up to \$10,000. She was released on a \$10,000 writ bond. Her bond was later increased to \$250,000.

The medical examiner's office told police that Biggs suffered no internal injuries and apparently died from loss of blood and shock.

The investigation is continuing and other arrests are expected.

The medical examiner's records listed Biggs' address as a homeless shelter.

At the time of the accident, Biggs, a self-employed bricklayer, had been homeless about two years after following on hard financial times, his 19-year-old son, Brandon Glenn Biggs said. He also had struggled with mental illness.

Brandon Glenn Biggs said he holds no animosity toward the woman accused of striking his father with her car. He said he would like to meet with Mallard. "I'd just like to talk with her. Just ask questions and ask why, to get a better understanding, I suppose. I'm not angry at her. I pray for her actually," said Biggs.

Biggs' mother, Meredith Biggs, sobbed, "How could she just leave him like that to die? Drugs and alcohol wear off, so why didn't she get him some help?"

Cincinnati, Ohio

Homeless Man Beaten Suffers Brain Injuries

A homeless man was sitting in Piatt park when a group of youths (4-6) between the ages of 14-16 came up behind him, hit him on the back of the head and then ran off.

Two days later a police officer saw the back of his head and took him to the hospital where he was given stitches. The man had a series of strokes that began a month later as a result of internal injury to his brain caused by the attack.

NOVEMBER

Cambridge, Massachusetts

Hawaiian runaway slain in retaliation

The body of 22-year-old Io Nachtwey was found floating in the Charles River.

The six alleged perpetrators (four men and two women) drove her to the Cambridge side of the Charles River. Everyone got out of the car and walked toward the river. The six had already planned to kill the woman, prosecutors said, and each had a job to do.

She was allegedly pinned to railroad tracks by the two women, struck in the head at least three times by someone using nunchucks (a martial arts weapon), and stabbed almost 15 times in the chest, abdomen, back, and arms. Her body was then rolled into the river.

“It was absolutely brutal,” said Patrick Haggan, a Suffolk County assistant district attorney. “It was vicious.”

The victim had been around the “pit” area of Harvard Square for two to three months and was broke and homeless.

Four men are charged with first-degree murder, and two women are charged with being accessories to murder. They allegedly killed Nachtwey in order to intimidate her friends. The group had recruited 10 to 15 homeless people into their criminal gang, requiring robberies of valuables as initiation. When some of the people did not follow through, the group killed Nachtwey, whom they had kept at the hotel, the prosecution said.

The accused are Luis Vasquez, 19, Ismael Vasquez, 23, Harold Parker, 27, Scott Davenport, 27, Ana White, 18, and Laura Alleyne, 17. Luis Vasquez has been indicted by a grand jury of first-degree murder, aggravated rape, and kidnapping.

DECEMBER

Cambridge, Massachusetts

Man stabbed twice during robbery

A 35-year-old homeless man was stabbed twice in the back in a Cambridge subway station. Two men were trying to rob him.

He was taken to Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, where he was treated for non-life-threatening injuries.

Covington, Kentucky

Homeless Man Beaten by Baseball Bat

A homeless man was helping fix a car and had crawled under the car when four or five youths with a baseball bat came over to where he was and hit his knee caps with the bat. The man who was injured did not tell the police.



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A Call to Investigate the Violent Acts and Crimes Committed Against People Experiencing Homelessness

Over the past several years advocates and homeless shelter workers from around the country have received news reports of men, women and even children being harassed, kicked, set on fire, beaten to death, and even decapitated. Over the last three years alone (1999 through 2001) there have been 110 murders of people without housing by housed people, 140 victims of non-lethal violence in 82 cities from 32 states and Puerto Rico.

NCH calls on Congress for a General Accounting Office (GAO) investigation into the nature and scope of violent acts and crimes that occur against people experiencing homelessness. People who are forced to live and sleep on the streets for lack of an appropriate alternative are in extremely vulnerable situations. We must ensure protection of civil rights for everyone, regardless of their economic circumstances or housing status. Please take a moment to sign on below.

Endorsement Form

Name of Organization _____

Contact Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Fax /Email _____

Send this form to:

National Coalition for the Homeless
1012 14th St. NW, Suite 600
Washington, DC 20005-3471
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Or sign on online at www.nationalhomeless.org/hatecrimes/signon.html
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