

# Victim of crime ended own life

By Marian Hubbard Jefferson

Special to Sentinel-Voice

DALLAS (NNPA) - On April 22, 2006, David Ray Ritcheson, an 18-year-old, Mexican-American youth was brutally beaten into an unconscious state, tortured and sodomized with a plastic umbrella pole, while his attackers, under the influence of drugs, yelled, "White power!"

The ordeal lasted over four hours and resulted in Ritcheson's being hospitalized for more than three months and undergoing over 20 surgeries. But according to the youth, who remembers nothing of the incident, the most painful aspect was the fact that the whole world knew every painful detail of his attack.

"I shouldn't care what people think or say. It's just the fact that everyone knows I'm the kid," Ritcheson told the *Houston Chronicle*. "It was bigger than Houston. It was bigger than Texas. It was bigger than America. Everybody in the world knew what had happened, and everybody knew the details of it."

Ritcheson, who had previously testified before Congress regarding the incident, later committed suicide by leaping to his death while on the *Ecstasy*, a cruise ship owned by Carnival Cruise Lines, which was en route from Galveston to Cozumel, Mexico.

Despite the fact that two men were convicted as a result of the crime, one receiving a life sentence and the other 90 years in prison, Ritcheson and many others felt full justice had not been served.

"Despite the obvious bias motivation of the crime, it is very frustrating to me that neither the state of Texas nor the federal government was able to utilize hate crime laws on the books today in the prosecution of my attackers," Ritcheson said during the congressional hearing. "I am upset that neither the Justice Department nor the FBI was able to assist or get involved in the investiga-

tion of my case because 'the crime did not fit the existing hate crime laws.'"

He continues, "Today I urge you to take the lead in this time of needed change and approve the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2007. I was fortunate to live in a town where local law enforcement authorities had the resources, the ability and the will to effectively investigate and prosecute the hate violence directed against me. But other bias crime victims may not live in such places. I ask you to provide authority for local law enforcement to work together with federal agencies when someone is senselessly attacked because of where they are from or because of who they are. Local prosecutors should be able to look to the federal government for support when these types of crimes are committed. Most importantly, these crimes should be called what they are and prosecuted for what they are — hate crimes!"

In response to Ritcheson's testimony, the United States House passed new hate crimes legislation, called The David Ray Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2007 or H.R. 254. The purpose of the bill is to enhance federal enforcement of hate crimes and for other purposes. The bill was passed with little pomp and circumstance, taking a back seat to a war-time spending package.

Hate crime legislation is not new. It was first enacted in 1968 and offered federal assistance to state and local governments in the prosecution of violent crimes based only upon race, religion and national origin. The law was needed because many local states and localities would not always pursue investigation, let alone prosecution of crimes when it pertained to a person's religion, race or national origin because of existing prejudice.

*Tuala Williams contributed to this story. Marian Hubbard Jefferson writes for the Dallas Examiner.*

# 'Hot Ghetto Mess' changes name

LOS ANGELES (AP) - BET's provocatively titled "Hot Ghetto Mess," which drew sharp criticism and overshadowed the rest of the cable channel's new schedule, is getting an upbeat new name.

"We Got to Do Better" is the title of the series debuting this week, BET spokeswoman Jeanine Liburd said.

"We've decided to change the name because we want to highlight the show's real intent, which is to offer social commentary in a context that sparks dialogue, debate and, most importantly, change," BET said in a statement.

The show's content remains unaltered, Liburd said. The half-hour video clip show is based on the website HotGhettoMess.com, which shows examples of outrageous fashion and behavior, mostly in the Black community.

The BET show will combine viewer-submitted and BET-produced content.

BET is characterizing the show as "pure social commentary." But critics have said it risks holding Blacks up

to ridicule and perpetuating negative stereotypes.

The new title echoes the "we can do better" slogan of the website, which was founded by Black lawyer Jam Donaldson of Washington, D.C., an executive producer on the BET show. On her site, she calls for a "new era of examination" by Blacks. "If this will help people not be distracted from the message, then fine," Donaldson said of the change. The newly renamed "We Got to Do Better" was characterized by BET entertainment chief Reginald Hudlin last week as an effort to take "a hard look at some dysfunctional elements of our community."

"The intent of the show is no different than what Bill Cosby is doing as he's going across the country and lecturing as he talks about the problems of the (Black) community that we need to address," he said.

Whether the name change satisfies detractors remains to be seen. Donaldson and Hudlin encourage their critics to see the show first, and then decide.

# Judge: Foxx can't be put in lawsuit

LOS ANGELES (AP) - A stylist who claims Jamie Foxx failed to pay for her services cannot expand her lawsuit against the actor to include allegations he mistreated her, a judge ruled recently.

Superior Court Judge Jane L. Johnson rejected Stacy Young's motion to amend her lawsuit, ruling that it did not comply with state court rules.

Young first sued Foxx for breach of contract in February, claiming he did not pay her all of the nearly \$6,000 she said he owed her for work she did in dressing him for an awards show and press junkets.

She tried to amend the suit to add allegations that Foxx

insulted her and disparaged her abilities in the presence of others. Young and her lawyers maintained that the alleged remarks are grounds for seeking damages for negligence and intentional infliction of emotional distress.

Young's lawyers said after the judge rejected the amendment that they planned to re-file the allegations according to court rules.

In court papers, Foxx's lawyer, Allison Hart Sievers, maintained the new allegations are "complete fabrications and have no merit whatsoever."

A message left after business hours with Foxx's publicist was not immediately returned.

# Your Horoscope Says... July 26-Aug. 1

## ARIES

It's a tailor-made week for your energies, so get out there and let every perfect moment flow toward you. You've got an abundance of pleasant feelings why not spread them around?

Soul Affirmation: This week, I forgive myself for everything that has happened.

Lucky Numbers: 23, 34, 52

## TAURUS

Remember that you are an intensely physical sign, and you need to move your body in order to relax. Take a walk, go for a swim, play tennis or scrub that kitchen floor. However you choose to move, you'll liberate your spirit and relax at the same time. Get going!

Soul Affirmation: Success is mine because I feel successful.

Lucky Numbers: 32, 47, 54

## GEMINI

You start the week feeling peaceful and wise. Discussions with a close friend may reveal the source of your inner freedom in a very tangible way. So talk about it. You've got everything good to gain.

Soul Affirmation: I let go of the old in order to make room for the new.

Lucky Numbers: 16, 28, 29

## CANCER

A message this week may necessitate travel on your part, and you may feel obligated to do something you don't want to. Let the energy flow past you and do what you think is best. Who you are, is who you are — be glad about it!

Soul Affirmation: Time is the greatest peacemaker of them all.

Lucky Numbers: 12, 17, 22

## LEO

Accomplishment gives you a feeling of personal satisfaction this week, and you'll feel very happy with your abilities. Take care not to quarrel with a friend; be tactful when asked for your "honest" opinion! Let minor irritations pass you by, and you'll find your way into a very romantic mood.

Soul Affirmation: I am willing to do more than my part to get the job done this week.

Lucky Numbers: 33, 46, 55

## VIRGO

Avoid getting involved in any office politics or family feuds this week. The week's energy is excitable, but not necessarily exciting. Do your own thing and be proud of what you do. Let others do their own thing, so long as it doesn't hurt anyone.

Soul Affirmation: A week of rejoicing is upon me. I celebrate.

Lucky Numbers: 2, 40, 45

## LIBRA

Do you realize that you are the only one who can tell you what to think and how to feel? Let go of any behaviors that are keeping you from achieving the things you want to achieve. Be creative and positive this week.

Soul Affirmation: All that I need is within me.

Lucky Numbers: 20, 34, 45

## SCORPIO

Any nervous energy you feel can be dispelled with some physical activity. You are doing just fine, so take long walks or try a yoga class and leave your worries behind. Everything is working out perfectly.

Soul Affirmation: The grandeur of my presence reflects the sunshine of my soul.

Lucky Numbers: 4, 37, 53

## SAGITTARIUS

You feel centered this week and full of efficient energy. Use this week to accomplish tasks, make plans, and finalize arrangements that need to be made. Face up to personal responsibilities with love and pleasure now.

Soul Affirmation: I am willing to make changes in my life.

Lucky Numbers: 20, 21, 24

## CAPRICORN

You can build a bridge with your imagination to reach the person you want to meet. Build the very best bridge your imagination can afford. Your soul mate will then cross over to you. Your intentions are warm and sincere.

Soul Affirmation: This week I find joy in the gifts that life has already given me.

Lucky Numbers: 28, 37, 44

## AQUARIUS

While those around you may seem disagreeable, mind your own business and don't take anything personally. Focus your mind on the project you most want to work on this week and put your beautiful energy into that with love.

Soul Affirmation: I give my busy brain a rest from worrying this week.

Lucky Numbers: 16, 48, 51

## PISCES

A happy week is in store for sociable you. Lots of friends and a party or two or three will keep your energy bright. Use caution while driving and watch for a pleasant surprise or two this week.

Soul Affirmation: Trust gives me a deep sense of peace and joy.

Lucky Numbers: 18, 21, 37

Bed 1-3 pc king set  
Brand name/no flip  
Pillow-top set, never used.  
In plastic w/factory war.  
\$200. can Deliver 510-4374

Bed - 1 NASA Space age  
memory foam set. New, in  
plastic w/factory warranty  
Sac: \$350 Can deliver.  
227-9128