

# Calif. newlywed killed, case of wrong identity

Special to Sentinel-Voice

ANAHEIM, Calif. — A newlywed killed by police after he stepped outside his home to confront suspected burglars was shot in a case of mistaken identity, police said.

Julian Alexander died after being shot twice in the chest by a police officer who was chasing four burglary suspects early Tuesday morning.

Police Chief John Welter said the officer ran into Alexander, mistook him for one of the four juvenile suspects and shot him.

"The last thing we ever want to do, No. 1, [is] take somebody's life," he said. "And we certainly don't want to take the life of someone who is mistakenly believed to be involved in some criminal activity."

"He was a good kid, trying to protect his house," said Alexander's mother-in-law Michelle Mooney.

"And the police, instead of asking questions, they just shot first. Somebody has to be held responsible for this."

Welter would not release the officer's name, but said he was a 10-year veteran of

the department. The officer was placed on paid leave pending an investigation.

"It's mistaken identity, but that doesn't bring my son back," said Alexander's father Jerry.

He said Alexander got married last weekend and his 19-year-old wife is expecting a baby in December.

Alexander's wife said she heard the gunshots and tried to go into the yard, but the officer told her to stay inside. From the window they saw Alexander handcuffed and bleeding in the front yard.

Paramedics treated him at the scene and took him to a hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

The four burglary suspects were detained and interviewed, but no arrests were made.

Welter said investigators would interview the officer to determine what commands he gave to Alexander before he fired. Investigations will be conducted by the

FBI, the Orange County Office of Independent Review and the district attorney's office, Welter said.

# Jasper-style lynching questioned in Texas?

By Jesse Muhammad

Special to Sentinel-Voice

PARIS, Texas (NNPA) — When the body of a 24-year-old Black man in Paris, Texas was discovered in the middle of a busy road, law enforcement declared the case a hit and run by an unidentified driver.

Now this small racially divided town's worst fears are brewing, with evidence pointing towards two White men who picked up Brandon Clelland in their Dodge truck before he was found mutilated and dismembered in September.

Forensics performed by the Texas Rangers found blood from McClelland and other DNA evidence on the undercarriage of the truck which has the victim's family calling the death a "Jasper-style" lynching. The term is a reference to the murder of a Black man in Jasper, Texas in 1998.

"The tied my son to that truck and drugged him until his body parts were detached," said Jacqueline McClelland, the victim's mother in an interview with *The Final Call*. "His body was so destroyed that it could not even be embalmed by the funeral home. This is a hate crime. I don't want the death penalty for these killers because that would be too quick. I want them to suffer for life in jail without parole since I will never have my son back."

The Lamar County District Attorney has decided race is not a factor in the death of McClelland because he was friends with alleged assailants Shannon Finley and Charles Ryan Crostley. Both men are 27-years-old.

Angry family members and community activists, however, are demanding a thorough investigation into a possible hate crime they say parallels the lynching of James Byrd Jr., in Jasper, Texas, which is several hours south of Paris.

In 1998, Byrd was strapped to a pickup truck and dragged to death by three White supremacists eventually convicted of murder. The case spurred massive protests and drew international outcry, which Paris authorities are trying to stunt but may have a

hard time avoiding.

According to a police report, McClelland was walking in front of the pickup a little after 4 a.m. on Sept. 16 when Finley and Crostley allegedly ran him down and dragged him up and down a Lamar County road until his disfigured body popped out from beneath the chassis.

"I don't see how it was racial, being as how they were good friends," said Stacy McNeal to the local press. He is the Texas Ranger who is leading the investigation.

"This was not a hit and run. They (Finley's family) hid the truck and even tried to wash the blood off. The police didn't even tape off the crime scene and some of my son's body parts were still lying out there," said McClelland, as she wiped away tears.

"If that would have been a White person killed they would have handled this immediately. This is just like Jasper," she said. McClelland added that her family was forced to have the funeral quickly due to pressure applied to the funeral home director. The family wanted to delay the funeral to allow for more investigation, she said.

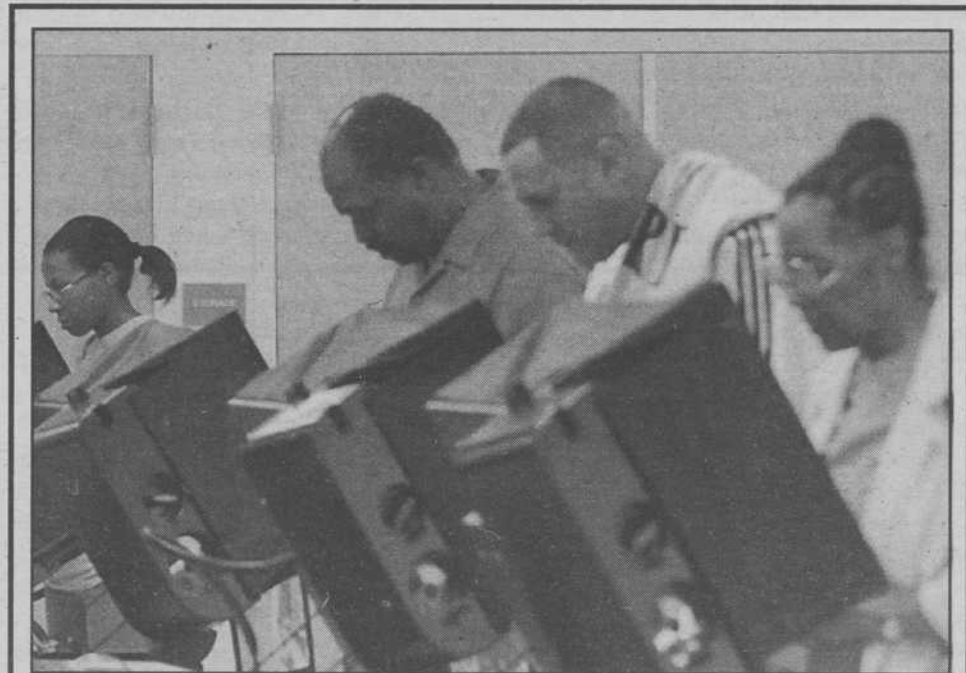
"He (the funeral director) was told by the police to hurry up and put the body in the ground because they didn't want any trouble coming to this town," said McClelland. "They took the life of my only son."

"I was awakened by our dog barking around 4:25 a.m. but I couldn't see what occurred because our camper trailer was blocking my view from my back porch. I wish I could have seen more," said Bobbi Baker. Baker, who is White, lives with her husband and son a few feet from the crime scene.

"We think this is horrible," said Jim Baker, who added that eight law enforcement officers live nearby so "things like this hardly happen over here and this was sad."

Crostley was arrested and is being held in the Lamar County Jail with a bail exceeding \$500,000. Finley has waived his

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Las Vegas take advantage of early voting at one of various sites around the Valley.

## Vote

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human factor in programming this equipment and testing it. Testing is the valuable point. If they do their testing right, they will catch any kind of program they have before Election Day."

Volunteer poll workers are still badly needed, said Davidson. "Equipment is only half of it. The process is really what ensures that everything is going to run smoothly, training the poll workers," she said. "In some areas they do not have enough poll workers yet... They need even emergency poll workers the morning of election to ship them out to a polling place where somebody got sick or called in and said 'I'm not going to be there.'"

Davidson said a total of 2 million poll workers are needed "because of the size of this election, the hype of it and the number of people who have registered... A lot of the states and jurisdictions are still looking."

Activists who have already observed long lines say voters must also take certain precautions on their own on Nov. 4.

"On Election Day, the biggest thing that you get prepared for that length of time and celebrate it," says Campbell. "If you don't have the ability to take a lot of time off from work, make sure you vote first," she said, echoing a new VOTE FIRST campaign enacted by her NCBCP, the National Urban League and the Black Leadership Forum. "And then when you go, make sure you have your ID in case you have any kind of problems. Even when you don't think you need it, take it anyway."

Campbell added that everyone should make sure they have the right polling place. And finally, "If you know you're registered to vote, do not leave that polling place without voting."

For problems encountered at the polls, Campbell says to call 1-866-OurVote, an election protection hotline that will staff lawyers and other volunteers on Election Day.

Davidson says she has one concluding message to voters for Tuesday: "Knowledge is power. If they know what their rights are, then they have far more power."

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