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The Wisconsin Light

Anatomy of a Mass Murder And Community Mobilization

By Jamakaya

Milwaukee, WI (GLINN)—The gruesome mass murder uncovered July 22 in Milwaukee has sent shock waves through the Gay community here. It has raised fears about the already alarming level of anti-Gay violence, renewed charges of racism and homophobia against the Milwaukee Police Department and shaken the foundations of the social, political and criminal justice institutions in the city.

THE CRIMES

Several of the eleven victims, whose dismembered body parts were discovered in the apartment of Jeffrey L. Dahmer, 31, at 924 N. 25th Street, had met the alleged killer at Gay bars or Gay Pride events.

Tony Hughes, 31, a deaf man who had recently moved to Madison to escape the violence of Milwaukee, was last seen May 24 leaving Club 219 on Milwaukee's south side. Jeremiah Weinberger, 23, of Chicago, was last seen July 6, leaving Carol's Speakeasy in Chicago in the company of a man fitting Dahmer's description. Dahmer has confessed to Weinberger's murder.

In addition, Dahmer has admitted in an affidavit, that after attending Chicago's Gay Pride Parade on June 30, he met Matt Turner (aka: Donald Montrell), 20, at a bus station in Chicago and enticed him to come to Milwaukee by promising him money to watch videos and to pose nude for photos. Dahmer said he lured other victims with the same techniques.

Dahmer confessed, that once at his apartment, he drugged his victims, strangled them with a strap or his bare hands and then dismembered their bodies. He admitted that after killing Oliver J. Lacy, 23, of Milwaukee, he performed a sex act on the dead body.

Along with the severed heads and limbs and the vats of acid and formaldehyde recovered from the foul smelling apartment, police confiscated dozens of Polaroid snapshots of the victims — photos taken while they were still alive as well as of the dismembered body parts.

On Thursday, July 25, Dahmer was formally charged with four counts of first degree intentional homicide for the deaths of Weinberger, Turner, Lacy and Joseph Bradehoft, 25, of Milwaukee. He was also charged with habitual criminality. Cash bail was set at \$1 million. More charges are expected to be issued by the District Attorney's office on August 6.

DAHMER'S RECORD

Dahmer was previously convicted of disorderly conduct and fined in 1982 for an incident of indecent exposure at Wisconsin's State Fair Park. He received one year of probation for another incident in which he exposed himself to children while urinating in public in 1986. Most recently, Dahmer served 10 months at the Milwaukee House of Correction (with work-release privileges) between May of 1989 and March of 1990 for second degree sexual assault and enticing a child for immoral purposes. That incident occurred in 1988 and involved a 13 year old boy.

Konerak Sinthasomphone, the 14 year old brother of the youth assaulted in the

1988 case, has been identified as another of the victims whose remains were found in Dahmer's apartment. Sinthasomphone was a Laotian immigrant who came to the U.S. with his family when he was four years old.

Other victims, all from Milwaukee, include: Ricky Beeks (aka: Raymond Lamont Smith), 33; Errol Lindsey, 19; Curtis Straughter, 18; Ernest Miller, 24; Anthony Sears, 26; and Eddie Smith (aka: The Sheik), 28.

Eddie Smith was last seen at Milwaukee's Gay Pride Parade on June 16, 1990. David C. Thomas, 23, was last seen in September, 1990. The remains of both Smith and Thomas were not recovered at Dahmer's apartment, but Dahmer has told police they were murdered as well.

Of the thirteen victims positively identified so far, eleven were African-American, one was Asian, one was white. Dahmer is white.

On July 29, Dahmer admitted to police that he killed two Hispanic men he had picked up in Milwaukee Gay bars. Dahmer has also confessed to murdering Steven H. Hicks, 19, in Bath Township, near Akron, Ohio, in 1978. A search is underway for his remains.

IS DAHMER GAY?

Patrons at several Milwaukee and Chicago Gay bars recall seeing Dahmer. They described him as a loner, distant and moody, who didn't seem quite comfortable or able to fit into the Gay bar scene. Several men related stories of Dahmer trying to pick them up for the evening, often on nearby streets after Dahmer had left the bars.

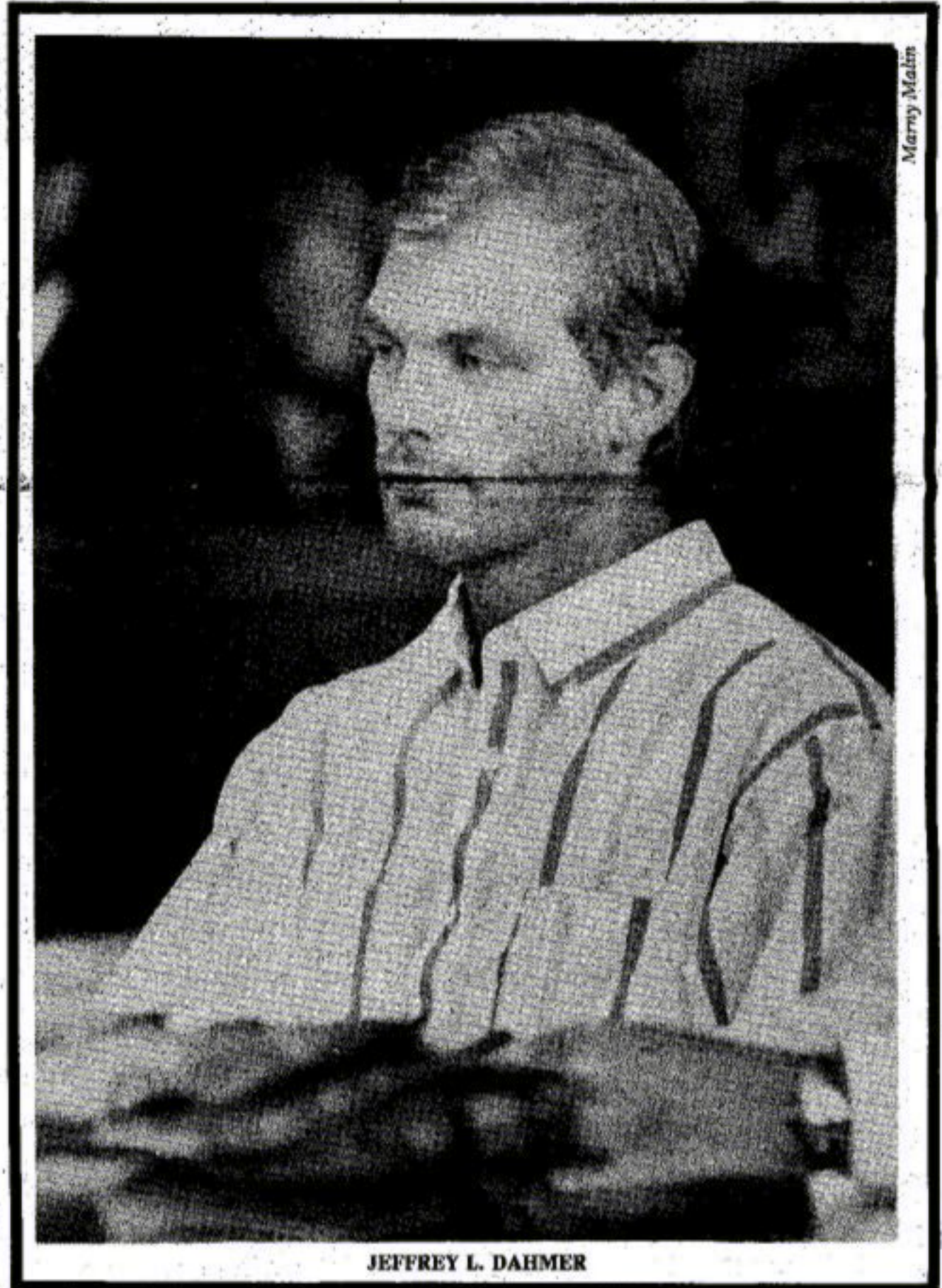
Prior to being sentenced for the sexual assault charge in 1989, Dahmer told Milwaukee County Circuit Court Judge William D. Gardner that he was an alcoholic and a homosexual with serious sexual problems. On the other hand, several people who met Dahmer or knew him over the years, including a woman who said she dated him, said that Dahmer had often expressed hatred toward Gays and African-Americans.

Jean-Paul Ranieri, a lay brother in the Episcopal Church who ministers and counsels Gay men, said that after a long talk with Dahmer he concluded that Dahmer was "extremely homophobic," with an almost Christian fundamentalist view of homosexuality. He recalled Dahmer implying that AIDS was God's judgment on Gays. Ranieri once encountered Dahmer at the Wreck Room, a Levi-leather bar in Milwaukee. At that time Dahmer told him: "I'm not as Gay as everyone else in here."

Bradley Babush, a former employee at Milwaukee's Club Baths (which was forced to close by health authorities in December, 1988), said that in the summer of 1987, "We had to kick Dahmer out because he was drugging people in his private room."

Babush also related this chilling story. "One person from Madison was unconscious and we couldn't revive him. We called the paramedics and they took him to the hospital. He was in the hospital for a week to ten days. The police also came and talked to Dahmer and to our staff. But after questioning, the police

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JEFFREY L. DAHMER

Thousands Expected For August 5 Candlelight Vigil and March

[Milwaukee]—In remembrance of the victims of Jeffrey Dahmer, concerned community groups will be holding a Candlelight Vigil on Monday, August 5, 1991, beginning at 7 p.m. at Juneau Park (Juneau Blvd. and Prospect Ave. in Downtown Milwaukee). Speeches at Juneau Park will center around remembering the victims, their lives, their friends and families and their contributions to Milwaukee.

The march, beginning at 8 p.m., will move down Kilbourn Avenue to MacArthur Square. Speeches will center around ways we can join together as a community and begin to rebuild Milwaukee.

The entire Milwaukee community is encouraged to attend the Candlelight Vigil. Those wishing to march should bring flashlights and/or candles and can assemble either in Juneau Park at 7 p.m., join the march down Kilbourn Avenue or

greet the marchers at MacArthur Square. Estimated time of arrival is 8:45 p.m.

Confirmed speakers include: Queen Hyler from Stop the Violence; Jeannetta Robinson of Career Youth Development; Scott Gunkel from Lambda Rights Network; Tim Grair from Queer Nation/Milwaukee; and Tony Hughes' mother. Hughes was one of the victims.

Thousands of people are expected to attend the march and vigil. Organizers need assistance in finding marshals to help with crowd control. Volunteers are urged to call Annabelle Havlicek at (414) 271-5819.

Organizers hope that all community members who care about the city will turn out for the march and vigil, mingle with their many neighbors of different backgrounds and interests, and help to begin the healing process for the whole city.

Marny Malin