

'A Texas version of Selma'

Fatal shooting leads to accusations of police brutality, racism

COLORADO CITY, Texas (AP) — Some Mexican-Americans say Hispanics living in Colorado City today are no better off than blacks who took to the streets in Selma, Ala., nearly 30 years ago. They say Hispanics can't get jobs or justice or equal treatment by the police, and that it's been that way so long that no one questioned the status quo until recently. "I grew up in this town," said Macario Gomez. "More than 50 years I've spent here and things have not changed."

But the fatal shooting of Gomez's son, Sammy, by a part-time policeman 17 months ago has spurred some of the town's Mexican-Americans to speak out with charges that police are racist and brutal, charges that city leaders deny. Going to the town of 5,400 from a large metropolitan area is "like entering the Twilight Zone," said Ruben Sandoval, a San Antonio-based attorney for the League of United Latin American Citizens who is trying to persuade the federal government to prosecute Sammy Gomez's killer on civil rights charges. "You leave Dallas or you leave

Houston on a Southwest Airlines jet and you cross a time zone and you end up landing in a Wright brothers airplane," Sandoval said. The Gomez case, the lawyer said, could be a watershed in Mexican-Americans' struggle for equal treatment in the smaller cities of West Texas. "This is a Texas version of Selma," Sandoval said. The struggle in Colorado City began May 13, 1988, when police offi-

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— Macario Gomez, victim's brother

cer Billy Ray Williamson fatally shot 27-year-old Sammy Gomez as he tried to arrest Gomez at his aunt's house on a rape charge. Williamson said he shot in self-de-

fense after Gomez lunged at him with a knife.

A week after the shooting, without seeing an autopsy report, a Mitchell County grand jury cleared Williamson of any wrongdoing.

What the autopsy showed — after county officials were forced to release the public document five months later — was that Gomez had been shot three times: once in the left side, once in the back right above the shoulder blade and once in the back of the head. The last shot, to the base of the skull, was fatal.

The medical examiner, Patrick Besant-Mathews of the Institute of Forensic Sciences in Dallas, did not challenge Williamson's story that he shot Gomez as Gomez attacked him with a knife.

But the dead man's parents didn't believe Williamson. They assert he bore an 8-year-old grudge against their son because of an accusation of police brutality.

Oscar Ortiz, the head of Colorado City's council of the League of United Latin American Citizens, didn't believe Williamson's story either, nor did Ruben Sandoval, the LULAC-affiliated lawyer.

Now, after a year of complaints and appeals to state and federal officials, the case is scheduled to be presented to a Mitchell County grand jury again Nov. 8. The FBI, U.S. Justice Department and the state attorney general's office are watching, and could step in if they aren't satisfied with the outcome. The FBI, U.S. Justice Department and the state attorney general's office are watching, and could step in if they aren't satisfied with the outcome.

"The truth has come out, but I don't know if they're going to prosecute the police in this town," Macario Gomez said after Contin's autopsy report was released. "Police brutality in this town has been going on for years and they're not going to stop."

Ortiz, who has lived in Colorado City for the past 12 years, agreed. "In Colorado City, you don't question the local authorities. They do no wrong."

Colorado City, a town of about 5,400 people 40 miles east of Big Spring, straddles the Colorado River. The school system is about half Anglo, 40 percent Hispanic and 10 percent black.

What's Up

Thursday

ALCOHOL AWARENESS WEEK: will have free music, entertainment and beverages from 8:30 until 11:30 p.m. at The Grove. Call 845-0280 for more information.

ALCOHOL AWARENESS WEEK: will have a discussion on alcohol and drug abuse prevention from noon until 1 p.m. at the College of Medicine. Call 845-0280 for more information.

AGGIELAND: Classes of '91, '92, and '93 can take yearbook pictures from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. at AR Photography.

CIRCLE K INTERNATIONAL: will clean campus bulletin boards all day on campus.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT FORUM: will discuss law and economic development in developing nations at 7 p.m. in 407 Rudder.

PHI BETA LAMBDA: will have a social for actives and pledges from 5 until 7 p.m. at Sundance.

RELIEF, EDUCATION AND CONCERN FOR HUNGER: will meet at 5 p.m. in 145 MSC.

NATIONAL SOCIETY OF BLACK ENGINEERS: will meet at 7 p.m. in 302 Rudder.

MEXICAN-AMERICAN ENGINEERING SOCIETY: will have a joint meeting with NSBE and a panel of speakers at 7 p.m. in 601 Rudder. For more information call Rebecca Jimenez at 696-8004.

ALPHA PHI OMEGA: will have a Friday morning yell hour from midnight until 1 a.m. at KTSR station. For more information call Chris at 846-0011.

AFRICAN STUDENT ORGANIZATION EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: will meet at 7:30 p.m. on the third floor of Sterling C. Evans Library in Group Study. For more information call Zachee Ngoko at 846-7765 or 845-8182.

PHI BETA CHI: will meet at 7 p.m. in 230 MSC.

FOURTH DAY: will have a discussion for all those who have made an Aggie Awakening at 6:15 p.m. at St. Mary's Student Center.

ST. MARY'S STUDENT ORGANIZATION: will visit Boy's Club at 7 p.m. Call 846-5718 for more information.

EL GRUPO LATINO: will have birthday celebrations and games at 8 p.m. in the Student Center of St. Mary's Church.

TAMU HORTICULTURE SOCIETY: will have a work party at 5 p.m. at the Horticulture Farm. For more information call Charlie Moomaw at 845-9170.

FREE THOUGHT SOCIETY: will have a discussion at 8 p.m. on the second floor of Rudder in front of the theater.

RECREATIONAL SPORTS: will post brackets for golf doubles. Entries close for punt, pass and kick at 5:30 p.m. in 154 Read.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS: will have a general discussion at noon. Call the C.D.P.E. at 845-0280 for more information.

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS: will have a general discussion at 8:30 p.m. Call the C.D.P.E. at 845-0280 for more information.

ADULT CHILDREN OF ALCOHOLICS: will have a general discussion at 6 p.m. For more information call the C.D.P.E. at 845-0280.

FORT WORTH HOMETOWN CLUB: will meet for bowling at 9 p.m. at Chimney Hill.

AGGIES FOR LIFE: will discuss abortion from a secular, medical, intellectual and biblical viewpoint from 7 until 9 p.m. in 228 MSC. Call Michele Stanfield at 693-0482 for more information.

Friday

STUDENT Y: applications for T-Camp '90 co-chair are due today.

AGGIELAND: Classes of '91, '92 and '93 can take yearbook pictures from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. at AR Photography.

AGGIE PLAYERS: presents "Waiting For Godot" in the Fallout Theater. Tickets are \$4 for students and the general public and \$2 for season ticket holders.

CIRCLE K INTERNATIONAL: will have its Texas/Oklahoma District Fall Retreat in Brownwood, Texas this weekend. Call Elizabeth at 847-0247 for more information.

DATA PROCESSING MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION: deadline for turning in applications for scholarships is today at 5 p.m. in 401 Blocker.

INTERVARSITY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP: will have Friday Night Fellowship with a guest speaker at 7 p.m. in 301 Rudder. Call Jennifer Van Nice at 764-9035 for more information.

CAMPUS CRUSADE FOR CHRIST: will have a Friday Night Alive meeting at 7 p.m. in 108 Harrington.

NEWMAN CLUB: will watch the second half of "Jesus of Nazareth" at 8 p.m. at St. Mary's Student Center.

AGGIES FOR LIFE: Rex Moses, founder of Texas Rescue, will speak at 7 p.m. in 701 Rudder. Call Michele Stanfield at 693-0482 for more information.

A&M HILLEL: will have Simchat Torah celebrations at 8 p.m. at Hillel Jewish Student Center.

RECREATIONAL SPORTS: will post brackets for pickleball singles at 1 p.m. in 159 Read.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS: will have a general discussion at noon. For more information call the C.D.P.E. at 845-0280.


Items for What's Up should be submitted to The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald, no later than three business days before the desired run date. We only publish the name and phone number of the contact if you ask us to do so. What's Up is a Battalion service that lists non-profit events and activities. Submissions are run on a first-come, first-served basis. There is no guarantee an entry will run. If you have questions, call the newsroom at 845-3315.

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