

**Texas Judge Goes Light  
on Sentencing of  
Killer of Gays**

District Judge Jack Hampton rejected a prosecution request to sentence an 18-year-old killer to life imprisonment because the victims--two homosexual men--were not blameless. "These two guys that got killed wouldn't have been killed if they hadn't been cruising the streets picking up teenage boys," Judge Hampton said. "These homosexuals, by running around on weekends picking up teenage boys, they're asking for trouble...I put prostitutes and gays at about the same level, and I'd be hard put to give somebody life for killing a prostitute."

Testimony in Richard Lee Bednarski's trial indicated that he and a group of high school students drove to a Dallas neighborhood for the purpose of harassing homosexuals on the night of May 15, 1988. Bednarski, a college student, persuaded another youth to join him in robbing the two victims, who had invited the young men into their car. After the four left the car, Bednarski ordered the two Gay men to disrobe at gunpoint. When they refused, Bednarski shot them.

Judge Hampton said that, in sentencing Bednarski, he also took into account the defendant's lack of a criminal record, his college attendance, and the fact that he was raised in a good home with a police officer as a father.

But the victims' homosexuality seemed to have been the focus of the sentencing. "I don't much care for queers cruising the streets picking up teenage boys," Hampton said. The sentence would have been much stiffer, he said, if the victims had been "a couple of housewives out shopping, not hurting anybody."

Gay and Lesbian rights organizations in Texas are pressing for a review of Hampton's actions. Hampton has since stated that he did not intend to offend homosexuals.

**Lesbian TV Character Threatened**

The positive portrayal of a lesbian in the ABC series Heart/Beat has prompted Christian fundamentalist groups to organize a negative form-letter-writing campaign, demanding that ABC either cancel Marilyn, the lesbian character, or the series. The network has been receiving between 1000 and 1500 negative letters a week.

The series is set in a women's health clinic, and several early episodes portrayed Marilyn's lesbian relationship in a positive light and explored the problems she encountered with her daughter's failure to accept her mother's sexuality.

Lesbian and Gay organizations encourage those interested in the continuation of the series to write to Aaron Spellin Productions/ Warner-Hollywood Studios/ 1041 N. Formosa Ave./ Los Angeles, CA 90046.

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