

For Immediate Release
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FARMINGTON MEN PLEAD GUILTY TO
RACIALLY-MOTIVATED ASSAULT

ALBUQUERQUE – **Paul Beebe**, 28, and **Jesse Sanford**, 26, of Farmington, N.M., pleaded guilty in U.S. District Court in Albuquerque to federal hate crime charges related to a racially-motivated assault on a 22-year old developmentally disabled man of Navajo descent, the Department of Justice announced today. A third defendant, **William Hatch**, 29, of Fruitland, N.M., pleaded guilty in June 2011, to conspiracy to commit a federal hate crime.

Beebe, Hatch and Sanford were indicted by a federal grand jury in November, 2010, on one count of conspiracy and one count of violating the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act. They were the first defendants ever to be charged under this law, which was enacted in October 2009. Beebe entered a guilty plea to one count of violating the Shepard/Byrd Act, and Sanford pled guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit a federal hate crime.

“Deplorable, hate-filled incidents like this one have no place in a civilized society,” said Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division Thomas Perez. “The Justice Department is committed to using all the tools in our law enforcement arsenal, including the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act, to prosecute acts of hate.”

“No one anywhere, but especially in a state like New Mexico that prides itself on its ethnic, racial and cultural diversity, should be victimized because of what he or she happens to be,” said U.S. Attorney for the District of New Mexico Kenneth J. Gonzales. “The young victim in this case was assaulted, branded and scarred because he happens to be a Native American – that simply is inexcusable and criminal. Today’s guilty pleas demonstrate the law enforcement

community's resolve that anyone who victimizes a person because of the color of their skin or ethnic heritage is brought to justice."

During the plea hearing, Beebe and Sanford admitted that Beebe took the victim to Beebe's apartment, which was adorned in racist paraphernalia, including a Nazi flag and a woven dream catcher with a swastika in it. After the victim had fallen asleep, the defendants began defacing the victim's body by drawing on him with blue, red, and black markers. Once the victim awoke, Beebe branded the victim, who sat with a towel in his mouth, by heating a wire hanger on a stove and burning the victim's flesh, causing a permanent deep impression of a swastika in his skin. The defendants used a cell phone to create a recording of the victim in which they coerced him to agree to the brand.

The defendants also admitted that they defaced the victim's body with white supremacist and anti-Native American symbols, including shaving a swastika in the back of the victim's head and using marker to write the words "KKK" and "White Power" within the lines of the swastika. The defendants further mocked the victim's heritage by drawing an ejaculating penis and testicles on the victim's back, telling him that they were drawing his "native pride feathers," all the while recording their incident on a cell phone to later play.

"As the primary federal agency responsible for investigating allegations regarding violations of federal civil rights statutes, the FBI stands committed to protecting the freedoms of all Americans," said Carol K.O. Lee, Special Agent in Charge of the Albuquerque Division of the FBI. "We remain dedicated to working with our state and local partners to aggressively investigate hate crimes and other civil rights violations. I would like to commend the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Attorney Kenneth Gonzales, the San Juan County District Attorney's Office and the Farmington Police Department for their work on

this case. I also am proud of the FBI agents who investigated this crime and helped bring the defendants to justice.”

These guilty pleas were the result of a cooperative effort between U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of New Mexico, the U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division and the San Juan County District Attorney’s Office. This case was investigated by the Albuquerque Division of the FBI in cooperation with the Farmington Police Department. It is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Roberto Ortega for the District of New Mexico and Special Litigation Counsel Gerard Hogan and Trial Attorney Fara Gold of the Civil Rights Division.

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