

For Immediate Release
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**TWO MEN SENTENCED FOR RACIALLY-MOTIVATED
ASSAULT IN FARMINGTON, NEW MEXICO**

***First Defendants Charged Under the Matthew Shepard
and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act***

ALBUQUERQUE - **Paul Beebe** and **Jesse Sanford** of Farmington, N.M., were sentenced today in U.S. District Court in Santa Fe, N.M., on 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. Beebe was sentenced to eight and a half years in prison followed by three years supervised release. Sanford was sentenced to five years in prison followed by three years supervised release. A third defendant, **William Hatch**, of Fruitland, N.M., previously pleaded guilty in June 2011 to conspiracy to commit a federal hate crime. Hatch has not yet been sentenced.

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 (Shepard/Byrd Act). They were the first defendants ever to be charged under this law, which was enacted in October 2009. Beebe pleaded guilty to one count of violating the Shepard/Byrd Act, and Sanford pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit a violation of the Shepard/Byrd Act.

“The sentence imposed today by the court reflects the hateful and heinous nature of the defendants’ actions, and serves as a reminder of courage of the victim who survived those acts and reported these crimes,” said Thomas E. Perez, Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division. “The Justice Department will not tolerate violent racially-motivated assaults and will continue to work cooperatively with our state and local partners to aggressively enforce

the Shepard/Byrd Hate Crimes Prevention Act.”

“Today the court sentenced Paul Beebe and Jesse Sanford to significant terms of imprisonment for the inexcusable crime of assaulting, branding and scarring a young man simply because he happened to be a Native American,” said Kenneth J. Gonzales, U.S. Attorney for the District of New Mexico. “Violence motivated by racial or ethnic hatred exacerbates fear and tears at the fabric of our society. Here in New Mexico, where we celebrate our ethnic, racial and cultural diversity, I will continue to work with the FBI to vigorously investigate and prosecute acts of violence that are motivated by hatred of another’s race or ethnic heritage.”

“Today’s sentencing is the result of the hard work of FBI special agents and our law enforcement partners, who were committed to pursuing justice until the perpetrators of this hate crime answered for their actions. But the fight against acts of hatred and intolerance goes on,” said Carol K.O. Lee, Special Agent in Charge of the Albuquerque Division of the FBI. “The Albuquerque FBI Division will continue to work with our federal, state and local law enforcement colleagues to investigate hate crimes, the number one priority of our Civil Rights Program.”

During their plea hearing in August 2011, Beebe and Sanford admitted that Beebe took the victim to his 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 be branded.

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 markers 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 the incident on a cell phone to later play for law enforcement, as "proof" that the victim consented to their acts.

The prosecution of these defendants was the result of a cooperative effort between the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of New Mexico, the U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division and the San Juan, N.M., 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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