

► **Super Bowl mania:** For some Raiders veterans, it's now or never. C1

► **Fixer-up help:** FHA offers little-known aid to help with repairs . D1

Tough mission: Marine Gen. James Jones faces challenge of rebuilding NATO. **Inside**



Behind the mask

Local mascots reveal the inner workings of promoting their teams. F1

Employment: An organized desk saves time, space, money. G1



Travel: Tucson offers blue-sky vistas, fine food, historic architecture. F4

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SPECIAL REPORT

THE LORDS OF BAKERSFIELD

Powerful gay men. Vulnerable teen-age boys. Murder. For years, some prominent local men who led secret lives were rumored to be protected. Whispers surrounding another important man's death prompt the question: Is there really a conspiracy?

By ROBERT PRICE
Californian staff writer
e-mail: rprice@bakersfield.com

The Lords of Bakersfield. Until recently, it was a little remembered local legend, of interest mostly to conspiracy theorists.

But in the aftermath of Stephen Tauzer's Sept. 13 murder and the subsequent arrest of his former colleague, Chris Hillis, the legend has resurfaced.

Some of the facts of the Tauzer case appear similar to aspects of the Lords legend, which goes like this: For more than a generation, Bakersfield was run by a cadre of men who led double lives. To the public these men were members of the community's most visible institutions, its justice system and the media.

But in truth, according to Lords lore, these men — a sprinkling of county executives, judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, even the newspaper's publisher — were part of a loose-knit, secretive network.

Some were homosexuals who preyed upon young men and boys, then used their positions of power and influence to protect one another from possible ramifications.

Occasionally, however, the preyed-upon lashed out, leading to a string of murders involving young gay men and their prominent, older male suitors.

Though the Tauzer murder script is a slight variation on that theme, the murder trial may well detour down the same general path.

"We might very well look at similar

Please turn to LORDS / A4



FELIX ADAMO / THE CALIFORNIAN

Calling themselves Mothers of Bakersfield, women picket the home of then-District Attorney Al Leddy over his reluctance to charge Glenn Fitts in Dana Butler's murder.

Why we wrote these stories

A conspiracy theory born in the late 1970s and early '80s had become a long-forgotten legend until last September, when the slaying of Assistant District Attorney Stephen M. Tauzer gave new life to speculation about "The Lords of Bakersfield."

We felt this legend and the crimes that spawned it warranted a closer look. We believed readers would find these stories relevant and compelling.

Californian columnist Robert Price and Assistant Managing Editor Lois Henry researched these stories for three months, interviewing more than 100 people and digesting thousands of pages of court transcripts, investigative reports and newspaper articles, resulting in this report.

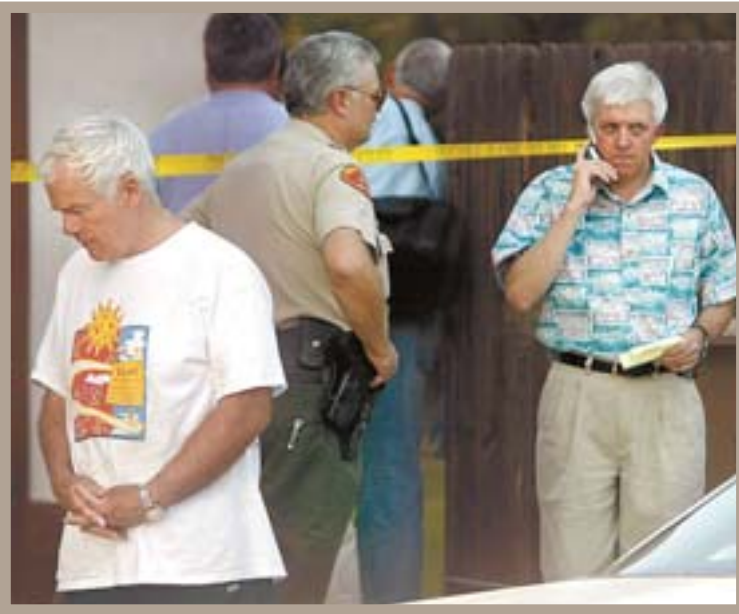
This Special Report is large — perhaps too large for some readers. Nonetheless, we believed it was important for us to be as detailed and complete as possible. And because *The Californian* was part of the story, we felt a particular responsibility to be thorough.

— Mike Jenner
Executive editor



ALAN FERGUSON / THE CALIFORNIAN

Fourteen-year-old Dana Butler was murdered in April 1979. Former Police Commissioner Glenn Fitts, the leading suspect, was never charged and later committed suicide. The case remains unsolved.



HENRY A. BARRIOS/THE CALIFORNIAN

District Attorney Ed Jagels and then-Sheriff Carl Sparks outside the home of Assistant District Attorney Stephen M. Tauzer on Sept. 15, 2002. Tauzer was found stabbed to death inside his garage.

Anti-war activists fill streets

Thousands march to show that not all Americans want war with Iraq

By LYNETTE CLEMETSON

N.Y. Times News Service

WASHINGTON — In a show of dissent that organizers said "shattered the false myth of consensus" for a war with Iraq, scores of thousands of protesters representing a diverse coalition for peace converged here Saturday for a rally and march against the Bush administration's threatened use of military force against Saddam Hussein's regime. A second rally drew similar crowds of demonstrators along the sunny waterfront in San Francisco.

Energized by the British band Chumbawamba, which opened the Washington demonstration at 11 a.m. with a new anti-war song, a swelling crowd, packed densely to stave off the frigid winter winds, filled several blocks west of the Capitol carrying signs, waving banners and chanting, "No war with Iraq."

Many in the crowd, a mix of young and old representing a broad range of social and political views, said the robust turnout represented a critical expansion of the anti-war movement, even as the United States moves closer to war.

The rally was sponsored by the peace group International Answer.

Two hours into the Washington march, swarms of demonstrators assembled along the San Francisco waterfront

Please turn to PROTESTS / A2

King's name used for host of causes

Civil rights icon's image invoked in political issues as well as commercials

By DEBORAH KONG

AP Minority Issues Writer

Martin Luther King Jr.'s image has been used to protest a potential war on Iraq, denounce a gay rights law and sell wireless phone service.

The trouble, of course, is that the civil rights leader "is not here to speak for himself," said the Rev. Richard Bennett, executive director of the African American Council of Christian Clergy in Miami.

On the eve of the holiday commemorating King's birth,

Please turn to KING / A10

Loving Lance: A battle that consumed three lives

Father fought to save him, but addict turned to others — including assistant D.A., who always, always was there

By ROBERT PRICE

Californian staff writer

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Four years before 22-year-old Lance Hillis died on an El Dorado County highway, he was walking down a road in Tehachapi late one night with three friends.

They'd been drinking and may have smoked a joint or two as well. A Kern County sheriff's patrol car drove past and the four teens took off running.

According to the Sheriff's Department's incident report, the two deputies gave chase. A minute or so later they caught a glimpse of two of the teens behind a Mexican restaurant, beside a blue Dumpster. By the time the patrol car spun around, the two figures had vanished.

They hadn't gone far. A deputy lifted the lid of the metal trash bin, and there they were — a 17-year-old kid nicknamed Rocky and his 18-year-old friend, Lance Hillis.

In detaining the two teens, the deputies wrote a deceptively innocuous prologue to a tragic and complex story.

It is the story of Lance Hillis and the two men who loved him.

One was the father who desperately wanted to help his son escape a savage

drug addiction, even if it meant sending his son to jail for a significant stretch of time.

The other was Assistant District Attorney Stephen M. Tauzer.

Tauzer's motives lie at the heart of the story — and, based on scenarios being explored by attorneys for both the prosecution and defense — at the heart of the murder trial of Chris Hillis that will take place sometime in mid- to late 2003.

This much seems certain: Tauzer's interest in Lance Hillis was greater, and significantly more complicated, than most people outside of local law enforce-



Chris Hillis



Lance Hillis



Stephen Tauzer

ment could have fathomed on Sept. 15, the day Tauzer's body was discovered in the garage of his northwest Bakersfield home.

Tauzer 'no godfather'

"He was homosexual," said Chris

Please turn to LANCE / A6

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WEATHER

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See page B8 for weather

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