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The Denver Post

Pair's defense: good citizens Victim beat woman, brothers say

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Howard Pankratz Denver Post Legal Affairs Writer

Twin brothers from Council Bluffs, Iowa, arrested in the stabbing death of a Denver man, were being good citizens when they attempted to protect a woman being beaten by the man, lawyers for the brothers said Monday. David and Kevin Bills, 21, are "good kids" who are seniors in college, their defense attorneys Phil Cherner and **Jim Castle** said.

"For all we know, they saved this woman's life," said Cherner, attorney for David Bills, who police said confessed to stabbing 34-year-old Patrick Kelly Perry.

"They were basically Good Samaritans who were attacked because they were Good Samaritans," said **Jim Castle**, who represents Kevin Bills.

According to a probable-cause statement written by detective D.G. Wallis and filed in Denver County Court, Bills allegedly told Detective Dave Neil that he stabbed Perry twice in the back after a fight started between Perry and Kevin Bills. Witnesses, however, tell a different story, saying that the Bills brothers and two other men attacked Perry. According to the court documents, a woman who witnessed the incident described the four white males dressed like "skinheads." Skinheads are often, but not always, associated with racist and chauvinistic attitudes. Both Perry and the woman he allegedly attacked were black. Witness' story

During the assault two of the males were on top of the victim while the other two were standing over him, kicking him, the witness reportedly told police.

But police and defense attorneys say the stabbing was not racially motivated.

"This is not a hate crime," said Neil. "Who jumps who is the big question."

Castle described Kevin Bills as "part of an anti-racist group. That is what he volunteers time for. He just happens to have short hair. That's what is so ironic about it," **Castle** said.

According to the lawyers, David is a senior at the University of Nebraska and Kevin is a senior in hotel and restaurant management at Metropolitan State College.

The Bills brothers, along with Josh Wright, 18, 8975 Yukon St., Westminster, and Kevin Snyder, 19, of Omaha are being held for investigation of first-degree murder. The four were arrested Saturday in Lakewood. The murder weapon was found in a Lakewood apartment, where the four had reportedly gone after the incident. Began Saturday morning

The string of events began about 3:05 a.m. Saturday, when police were called to an apartment complex at 3100 W. 14th Ave. in Denver on a report of a man beating a woman.

But by the time police arrived, the two people involved in the incident had left and the witnesses - some of whom would later become the suspects in Perry's death - told police what they had seen.

Nearly two hours later, police were called back to the complex and found Perry in the middle of the street. He died later at Denver Health Medical Center.

Cherner said the two young men and two of their friends got involved when they saw Perry hitting the woman.

"They see some guy attacking some woman and they tell him to knock it off. ..." said Cherner. "And apparently somebody calls the police because the police arrive. By the time they get there this guy has run off.

"The guy (later) comes back to the apartment complex and threatens my client and his friends and brandished something that appeared to be a weapon. It is dark, he is bigger than they are, he is making verbal threats and coming at them and actually gets into an altercation with them. And that's where he is stabbed," said the defense attorney.

The statement by Wallis also says that when police arrived the first time, the young men told the officers that they "would look for the suspect." Officers then left.

Denver Post staff writer Marilyn Robinson contributed to this report.

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