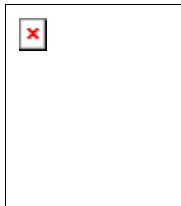


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9/22/06-Hawkins

Teens Killed By Train Identified As Azleway Runaways

Officials confirm two teens, killed by a train in Hawkins, were runaways from Azleway Boys' Ranch, a facility for troubled boys in Chapel Hill. Officials say they were Harry Rutledge, 15, of Bestrop and Chris Hill, 17, of Dallas. Officials say the teens had been living at Azleway for the past few weeks, but ran away last Saturday, hiding out behind Hawkins High School in a pine thicket.



Azleway Ranch director Monte Osburn says staff members followed standard procedure when the teens went missing. "We looked for the kids and encouraged them to come back," said Osburn.

But Rutledge and Hill were nowhere to be found until yesterday morning. Officials say Rutledge and Hill's bodies were found on the tracks near Highway 14. They were run over by a Union

Pacific train. Crew members say they tried to stop the train when they saw the teens.

Detective A.J. Randell with the Hawkins Police Department is now trying to figure out what happened between Saturday night and Thursday morning. So far, he's been able to track down the teens' steps in the past three days. He says they lived under a pine thicket behind Hawkins High School.

Randell says the teens may have chose then location because Hill attended Hawkins High School last year and they were looking form someone to help them out. Randell says the pair asked students for money. They got between \$3 and \$4 during their three days there.

Detective Randell says the boys stole a key to get into Hawkins High School. "We know they got the keys to the gym during football practice. This is where they got clean clothes. They were getting clean clothes when everybody left," said Randell. He says the boys also took candy and soda, which he believes was their only nourishment during their time there.

The stack of documents from the investigation is hundreds of pages long. Randell says he expects the stack to be twice as big, before any conclusive results are made. He says the crime is being investigated as a homicide, until proven otherwise, which is standard procedure. "It is odd to me, and the other investigators think it's odd, that two people would lay down on the track and hear that train coming honking and not move," said Randell.

Randell says they were wearing Hawkins High School track suits when they were found. Osburn says it was a heartbreaking situation for both the staff at Azleway and the kids there. "We had a lot of staffing available to address the grief and the sense of loss with the staff and kids," said Osburn.

Officials say the teens had been in trouble with the law before. Randell says Rutledge and Hill were "wards of the state." He's waiting on autopsy results to reveal the exact cause of death. Randell expects that to come in Monday.

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