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Beach set to appear on 'Dateline'

By KIM SKORNOGOSKI
Tribune Staff Writer

A two-hour "Dateline NBC" story about Barry Beach, who is fighting to overturn his 100-year prison sentence in the 1979 murder of 17-year-old Kimberly Nees, will air Friday, March 21 at 8 p.m.

Nees, a Poplar High School valedictorian and athlete, was beaten to death and dragged to the bank of the Poplar River.

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The crime went unsolved until 1983 when Beach was arrested in Louisiana. During a police interrogation, Beach confessed to beating Nees with a wrench and tire iron.

No physical evidence linked him to the crime, but he was convicted based on his confession.

In repeated failed attempts for appeal,

Beach insisted that his confession was coerced by aggressive investigators.

Centurion Ministries, a New Jersey-based nonprofit that works to free people they suspect are innocent who are sentenced to death or life in prison, took up the case and has been fighting in the court system and in the court of public opinion on Beach's behalf.

In January, Centurion lawyers asked for a new trial before a District Court judge in Wolf Point based on interviews pointing to a group of girls who allegedly confessed to Nees' murder.

After hearing hours of testimony from Centurion last May, the state Board of Pardons and Parole denied Beach's request for clemency.

The nonprofit also is raising money for a \$200,000 media campaign declaring his innocence.

Film crews traveled to Poplar in June 2007 to shoot re-enactments of the crime and interview Poplar residents. They also filmed Beach's clemency hearing.

While in Poplar, a pickup truck used during the filming of the re-enactment was vandalized. While the crew took a break, the truck was left on the river bank near where Nees was murdered. Its windshield and side window were broken when they returned.

The news program airs on KBGF, channel 50 or cable channel 6.



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STORYCHAT

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Comments by: **YankeeClipper**

Posted: Thu Mar 13, 2008 8:35 am

With cops like boldone and the county attorney, justice is a bi-product of the court room. Convictions is what they are after and no pride in how they get them and when they get them the special ed student at the corricitional department is more than happy to take them in and change the sentence to keep them in as long as possable.

Comments by: **justiceforbarry78** Posted: Wed Mar 12, 2008 5:29 pm

If you want to read the whole story go to montanansforjustice.com. They also have a blog where a lot of interesting conversation is happening. The State of Montana is not going to look real good when Dateline runs the show. Seems the Attorney Generals office and the Board of Pardons and Parole will stop at nothing to try to uphold a conviction, even if they know it is wrong. If nothing else God will even the score someday, pray for Barry, his family, Kim Nees, her family and all that are involved with this travesty.

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