

AIM activists cry racism

Protesters call for judge's recall at Alliance demonstration



Photo by Maurine Roller

AIM ACTIVIST RUSSELL Means talks with a group of protesters in Alliance who gathered to demonstrate against Box Butte County Judge Robert Moran.

By MAURINE ROLLER
Regional Correspondent

ALLIANCE — About 100 people, carrying flags, banners and placards and led by American Indian Movement activist Russell Means, marched on the Box Butte County Courthouse Thursday afternoon protesting racism.

The demonstrators were protesting what they perceived as racism in legal proceedings following the January stabbing death of 18-year-old American Indian Jason Schmidt. The case of Schmidt's accused assailant, 17-year-old Angel Carrizales of Scottsbluff, was transferred to juvenile court by order of Box Butte Judge Robert Moran.

In addition to the Carrizales case, the case against Andy Vasquez, 15, of Alliance, was transferred to juvenile

court by Moran.

Three people were charged in connection with the killing. One of them, Robert J. Richards, 21, of Chadron, pleaded guilty to first-degree assault. Richards also is an American Indian.

Carrizales originally was charged with murder, Margheim said. When his case was transferred to juvenile court, Margheim dismissed the murder charge and filed charges of conspiracy to commit felonious assault against Carrizales.

Vasquez also faces a conspiracy count in juvenile court, Margheim said.

The AIM members, some from Omaha, Denver and Arizona, according to Means, were joined by about 60 American Indians from Nebraska and the nearby Pine Ridge Reservation in South

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Means finds inspiration at Alliance

ALLIANCE — Russell Means, American Indian Movement activist, became aware of the murder case of Alliance American Indian Jason Schmidt in an unusual way. He was arrested.

Means was arrested while driving through Alliance May 10 on charges of driving with invalid license plates, registration and driver's license. Means' vehicle bore Oglala Sioux tribal plates and he carried Oglala Sioux registration and license.

"They threw me in jail for having no driver's license or registration, all of which I have, but they won't recognize," Means said.

After Means, a resident of Chinle, Ariz., was released two days later on a personal recognizance bond, he was introduced to the Rev. Don Mink, pastor of the Indian Mission in Alliance.

Mink told Means about Schmidt's murder and the Indian and non-Indian youth demonstrations in front of the courthouse after Judge Robert Moran transferred Schmidt's case to juvenile court.

"After I found out about these young kids, they became my inspiration," Means said.

According to Means, his arrest showed the dual standards of the justice system.

"So when a person commits a traffic offense, it's more heinous that murdering an Indian," he said.

Means appeared before Judge James Hansen Thursday morning on the charges of invalid licensing, and requested a jury trial. A pre-trial hearing is set for 1:30 p.m. June 29 and jury selection is scheduled for July 2.