

# Current Events Rubric

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International News:

On December 5, 2010, in Cuernavaca, Mexico, a boy named Edgar was arrested. He is also called "El Ponchis." Even though he is only fourteen years old, the police believe he was involved in the drug cartels (organizations) in Mexico. He is accused of participating in four executions in which people had their heads cut off.

El Ponchis says, "I participated in four executions, but I did it drugged and under threat that if I didn't, they would kill me."

Edgar could be charged with federal crimes that include murder. If he is found guilty of the crime, he could spend three years in jail. After he left the courthouse, he was highly guarded. Fifteen policemen guarded him because they were afraid someone might try to kill him because of what he knows.

According to the information they have, Edgar was a poor boy who grew up in the city of Cuernavaca. Edgar could be from San Diego, California originally but the United States Embassy hasn't verified that he is. He may be a dual citizen of both the United States and Mexico. If he is, he might be sent back to the United States.

El Ponchis' story is not the only one of its kind. It is not unusual for children to be used by the drug cartel. According to videos on You Tube, there are even twelve year olds who are hit men. That means if students here in Weston Middle School lived in Mexico, they might be made into hit men for the drug cartel!

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# Mexican state will try boy accused of beheadings

AP Associated Press

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By OSWALD ALONSO, Associated Press — 1 hr 17 mins ago

CUERNAVACA, Mexico — A 14-year-old boy accused of participating in four beheadings for a Mexican drug cartel will be tried under a state juvenile law that carries a maximum of three years in prison if convicted, a judge said Sunday.

The juvenile court judge in the state of Morelos made the ruling after a daylong hearing on whether the federal government should handle the case because of the gravity of the allegations against the boy, known as "El Ponchis."

The judge said that Mexican law allows him to preside over cases involving minors facing federal charges and that the teenager will face charges of murder, organized crime and other allegations in the state of Morelos.

After the hearing, the boy was escorted from the courthouse by 15 state police officers. Dozens more state and federal police were stationed inside and outside the court building.

Authorities said they arrested El Ponchis on Thursday at an airport south of Mexico City with a 19-year-old sister. Mexican officials allege the boy was working for the Cartel of the South Pacific, a branch of the splintered Beltran Leyva gang. The sister has said they were headed for Tijuana, where they planned to cross the border and seek refuge with their stepmother in San Diego.

Many youths have been used by drug cartels, but the story of El Ponchis may be the most shocking. A YouTube video that emerged a month ago sparked talk of a child hit man — said by some to be as young as 12.

"I participated in four executions, but I did it drugged and under threat that if I didn't, they would kill me," the boy said when he was handed over to the federal prosecutor Friday.

Authorities identified the curly haired suspect only by his first name, Edgar.

Morelos Gov. Marco Adame Castillo has said the boy was born in San Diego, California, and Mexican officials were researching whether he has dual nationality. A U.S. Embassy official, who spoke on condition of anonymity due to embassy policy, said earlier that American officials had not confirmed his citizenship.

As of Sunday his citizenship status was still unclear as was the possibility of the teenager being sent to the United States.

Despite apparently being born in the United States, he grew up in a poor, urban neighborhood packed with businesses near the city of Cuernavaca, where the people who knew him said everyone called him El Ponchis since he was 4, although no one knew why.

On Saturday, a car with a speaker on its roof drove around the neighborhood narrating how the boy had been captured. The neighbors, who did not want to be quoted by name because of safety fears, remembered him as a quiet boy and said they think the allegations against him are false.

The boy's capture, and subsequent presentation to the press, angered a Mexican children's advocacy group that said Sunday the teen's privacy and due process rights were violated. The group, the Children's Rights Network said Mexican officials should not have allowed journalists to question the boy after his arrest.

It's common practice in Mexico for authorities to parade adult and young suspects in significant cases before the news media.



AP — Soldiers escort a 14-year-old known as 'El Ponchis' who is suspected of working as a killer for a drug...

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## National News:

On Sunday December 5, 2010 there was a memorial service for Sam Hengel. Sam Hengel was a fifteen year old boy from Wisconsin. He went to Marinette High School. He was described as being "a quiet, helpful leader who loved the outdoors" by friends who knew him. But despite these qualities, he brought guns and knives into his social studies class and held his class hostage for over four hours. He fired shots and shot up things in the classroom but he only killed himself.

No one knows why Sam did this. People said he was "well-liked and had many friends."

No one in the school realized that Sam was holding his class hostage until a parent came to look for his daughter who hadn't come home from school. The Principal, Mr. Lambie went to the classroom to look for the girl and found the door locked. Sam let the girl go with the Principal but told him to leave. He did this while pointing his gun at the Principal. Finally, a SWAT team saved the other students by taking over the classroom. Sam shot himself and died the next day.

The memorial service took place at the school's auditorium and students, parents and community members visited the family there for over two hours. There were lots of pictures of Sam at all ages in this life, doing all the things he loved. There was even a slide show.

Rev. Nicholas Johannes spoke there at the memorial service. He said, "People's lives revolve around work so much they don't list or help each other anymore...This is not about Sam's sin. This is about the world's sin. Something has gone terribly wrong....We need to say I love you and mean the words."

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DOG SHOW HISTORY: Do you ever wonder how dog shows got started?

# Hundreds attend Wisconsin hostage taker's memorial

AP Associated Press

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By TODD RICHMOND, Associated Press - 30 mins ago



AP - The undated photo provided by the family shows Sam Hengel who authorities say shot himself Monday night.

MENOMINEE, Mich. - Hundreds of people showed up Sunday for a memorial to a 15-year-old Wisconsin boy who held his social studies class hostage before shooting himself last week, setting aside the terrifying standoff to remember him as a quiet, helpful leader who loved the outdoors.

Sam Hengel's family held the gathering in a school auditorium in Menominee, Mich., because they expected so many supporters. Menominee lies just across the Menominee River from Marinette, Wis., where Hengel held 26 classmates and his teacher at gunpoint for nearly six hours.

Barb Post of Marinette, Wis., said she didn't know Hengel's family but attended anyway to show support.

"You care about the people and the family, and you understand it could happen to anybody," Post said.

Why Hengel took his class hostage remains a mystery. Other students and his teacher have said he was well-liked and had many friends.

The standoff last Monday at Marinette High School began when Hengel returned to his sixth-hour Western Civilization class from a bathroom break. He had two semi-automatic pistols and a backpack jammed with more than 200 rounds of ammunition and a pair of knives.

Students and police said he immediately fired three shots, blasting a hole in a wall and tearing apart a film projector. Students talked to him about everything from hunting and fishing to his favorite movies in an attempt to keep him calm.

No one else in the school apparently recognized the sound of the shots as gunfire, and Hengel told the teacher to post a note on the door telling seventh-period students to report to the library. As a result, no one realized the class was in danger until about a half-hour after school ended, when a man came to the school office looking for his daughter.

Principal Cory Lambie determined the last class the girl attended was Western Civilization and went to the room to find the door locked. When Lambie unlocked the door, Hengel pointed his gun at him and told him to leave. Hengel allowed the girl to go with Lambie.

The standoff dragged on for four more hours, with teacher Valerie Burd acting as a go-between for Hengel and police.

A SWAT team stormed the room after Hengel fired three shots about 8 p.m., destroying the classroom phone and hitting a computer. Hengel shot himself as officers reached him. He died the next morning.

Flurries fell under an overcast sky Sunday afternoon, adding to a feeling of gloom. The line to greet the teen's parents and two younger brothers stretched out of the auditorium and into the lobby, where mourners gazed at collages of photos depicting Hengel as a small child, holding a string of fish and paddling along on a canoe trip with his family.

On a table was a message board. Hengel's brother, Ben, had written "I will always miss you, brother" on it. Next to the board were pin-on buttons emblazoned with Hengel's face and take-home cards listing

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symptoms that might indicate suicidal thoughts.

Hengel's family stood in front of the auditorium's stage and hugged one well-wisher after another for more than two hours. They had set up a tent, a canoe and paddle and a mock campfire on the stage. They hung up Hengel's Boy Scout and tae kwon do uniforms and his replica Green Bay Packers jersey with linebacker A.J. Hawk's No. 50 on the front next to the stage.

A slide show showing Hengel hiking in the woods, canoeing and riding horses with his family played before the ceremony started. Many of the photos featured him with his father, Jon.

The Rev. Nicholas Johannes told the crowd he wondered why Hengel did it as he held the boy's hand in the hospital, but said he'll never know. Hengel was a good person and God would not judge him on one act, Johannes promised.

People's lives revolve around work so much they don't listen or help each other anymore, he said.

This is not about Sam's sin. This is about the world's sin. Something has gone terribly wrong," he said. "We need to say 'I love you' and mean the words."

Keith Schroeder, Hengel's scoutmaster, said he had looked forward to seeing how Hengel would turn out as a man, because he was such a compassionate youth and always had a smile on his face. He said Hengel would be any scout's partner and made the best French toast in the troop.

"Sam was my best friend," Schroeder said. "We don't know for sure what went on in Sam's mind, but we know he chose a permanent solution to a temporary problem. His emotional bucket was empty. We didn't see his bucket was empty and I don't think Sam did, either."

Jon Hengel told the crowd his son was a quiet leader who was "always ready to go."

"Someday when we meet again you can tell me what happened. You are one of the great ones," he said. "You and your brothers are the North Star in my life. I love you, Sam."

A bugler closed the ceremony with "Taps." Dozens of Hengel's fellow Boy Scouts filed into the auditorium's aisles and saluted.

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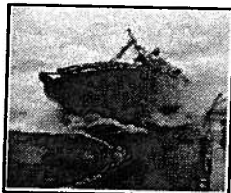


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#### School reopens as details emerge ...

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Chicago Tribune



Photo: This undated photo provided by the Hengel family shows Sam Hengel ...

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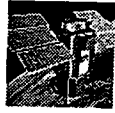
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#### Local News:

On December 4, 2010, David Gemeasky Jr. attempted to kill his mother and father in their home in Griswold, CT. "Police said 24-year-old David Gemeasky Jr. stabbed his father, David Gemeasky Sr. Saturday night while he was in bed and then stabbed Tamara Brennan as she tried to flee."

David Gemeasky lived with his parents in Griswold, CT. No one knows why he attacked his parents. But after being stabbed by his son, the father killed his own son by shooting him in the chest.

David Gemeasky Jr. was found dead by EMS when they arrived at the house. The parents were treated at William Backus Hospital for their wounds. Their injuries were not serious but their son is dead. This was a tragic story.

#### Entertainment:

The new musical Spider Man will be opening on Broadway next month. This musical is being directed by Julie Taymor, the choreographer of The Lion King. The production costs \$65 million dollars to produce. This is the most expensive show ever produced on Broadway.

In this musical, Ms. Taymor has actors flying through the house going over 40mph. The musical has been having a lot of technical difficulties though. These problems have resulted in actors being injured in rehearsals and in previews. "In recent weeks, a dancer broke his wrists attempting a flying stunt in rehearsal, and a different actor sustained injuries to his feet trying the same stunt."

This week, Natalie Mendoza, got a concussion while performing in the first preview. Ms. Mendoza plays the part of Arachne who is the villainess of the show. Ms. Mendoza was hit in the head by a piece of equipment that was being held in place by a rope. Despite being told she had a concussion and shouldn't perform, Ms. Mendoza did the next performance. However, her injury is forcing her to step out of the role for a few days. As a result, her understudy will cover the part for her until she returns.

The accidents are being investigated by the New York State Department of Labor.

# Police: Man shot and killed son who stabbed him

Published: 09:22 p.m., Sunday, December 5, 2010

GRISWOLD -- State Police say a Griswold man stabbed his parents and then was fatally shot by his father.

Police said 24-year-old David Gemeasky Jr. stabbed his father, David Gemeasky Sr. Saturday night while he was in bed and then stabbed Tamara Brennan as she tried to flee. David Gemeasky Sr., though injured, shot his son in the chest. He was found in a basement bedroom and was declared dead at the scene by emergency medical responders.

The 45-year old Gemeasky Sr. and Brennan, who is 43, were taken to William Backus Hospital. Police said they suffered serious, but not life-threatening injuries.

Police did not say what the motive was for the son's alleged attack. He and his parents lived together in the Griswold house.



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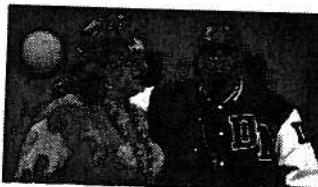
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# Concussion Sidelines 'Spider-Man' Actress After Another Stage Mishap

By Christine Fenno Posted Dec 4th 2010 09:32AM

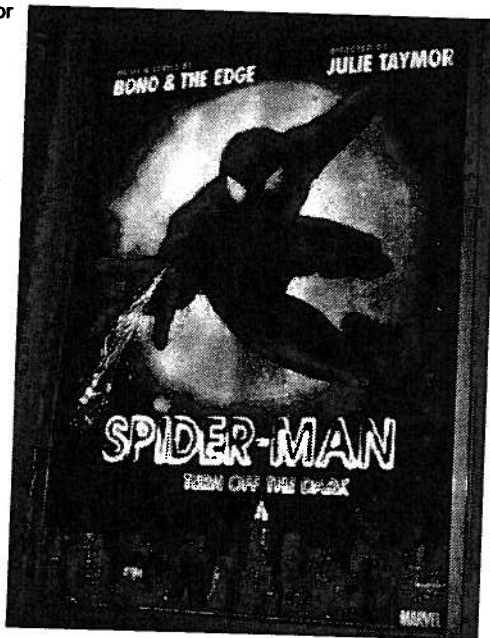
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Look out! Here comes...yet another bummer for Spidey!

A third cast member in the beleaguered Broadway musical 'Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark' has been injured on the job. In recent weeks, a dancer broke his wrists attempting a flying stunt in rehearsal, and a different actor sustained injuries to his feet trying the same stunt.

Now, a spokesman for Natalie Mendoza, who plays villainess Arachne, has announced that the actress suffered a concussion during the production's first preview on Sunday, which was a Broadway audience's first look at director Julie Taymor's highly anticipated theatrics (with a score by U2's Bono and The Edge) in action. Mendoza did not immediately report the injury to producers or the actors' union, and she participated in the next performance against doctors' orders.



Charles Eshelman, Getty Images

The incident reportedly occurred offstage when the actress was struck by a rope that was holding a piece of equipment, according to the New York Times. An understudy will step in until Mendoza, 30, returns to her role next week.

The New York State Dept. of Labor confirmed on Friday that it was investigating the accident, and

a rep for the agency said: "The production has explained to us the details of the accident. They also indicated that they have made changes to prevent this type of accident from happening again. We plan to follow up regularly to ensure that these modifications are adequate." No further details about "modifications" were released.

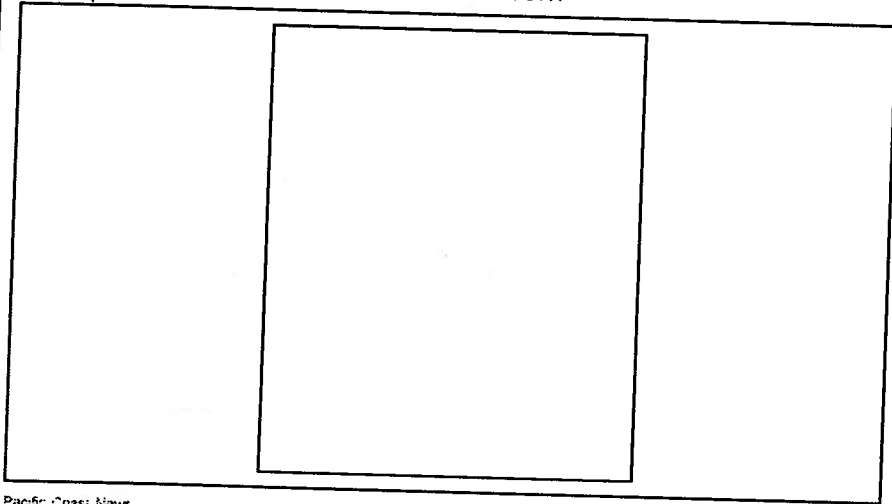
Taymor has yet to comment publicly about Mendoza's injury.

The chain of events is now alleged to be: Mendoza -- a slim 5'6" -- was injured during the Sunday performance, saw a doctor sometime afterward (Monday was a day off for the cast members), then posted a one-word tweet on Tuesday morning that said "Concussion," and decided to take the stage on Tuesday night. But a spokesperson for the musical, Rick Miramontez, insists "It was her choice, she insisted on doing it."

By mid-week, the actress had allegedly informed the production of her concussion diagnosis, then fell ill by Thursday, and her understudy has played the role since.

The technically challenging 'Spider-Man' has cost \$65 million, twice as much as any Broadway show in history. The musical is officially scheduled to open for critics next month, with preview performances set to continue until opening night.

### Caught in Action: Celebrities Hard at Work



Pacific Coast News

108 photos

Woody Harrelson films a violent scene in Downtown Los Angeles for his upcoming movie "Rampart"

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Filed under: Music News

Tags: bono, Broadway, spider-man, u2

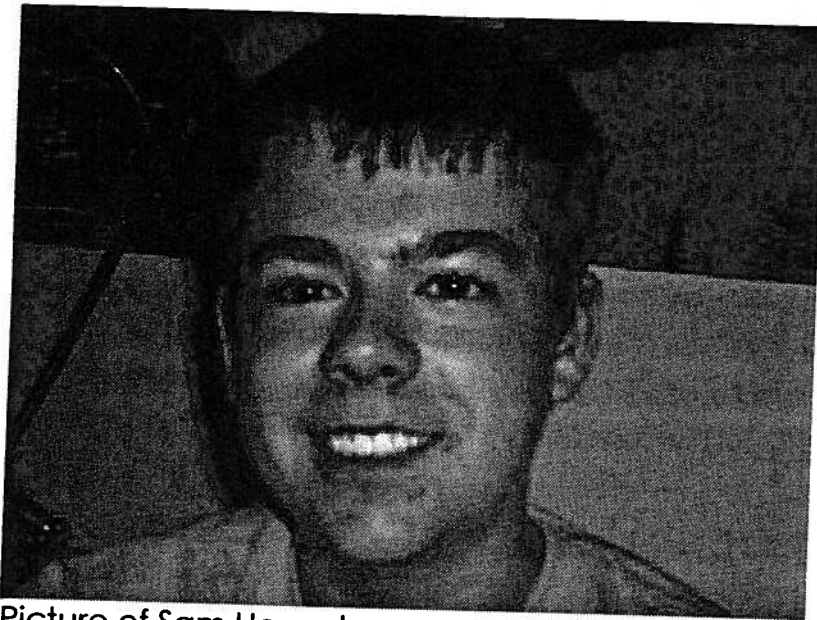
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### From PopEater

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What I Think:

The article that struck me the most was my national article. I think it was wrong of Sam to hold his class hostage because you aren't suppose to have guns and knives in school. You shouldn't take your anger out on other students and you shouldn't threaten your class because they didn't do anything wrong. I can't imagine being a student stuck in that classroom for over four hours with a student who is threatening you with guns and knives. They must have been feeling a lot of emotions. They were probably pretty frightened, pretty pissed and pretty confused by what was happening. I think it was sad that Sam killed himself and chose to be done with his life. There are always other options and help available.



Picture of Sam Hengel.