

Suspect makes first court appearance in killing of transgender teen

David Bogdanov made first appearance in court Dec. 8, faces second-degree murder charge

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The suspect in the death of a Vancouver transgender teen made his first appearance in Clark County Superior Court last week following months of investigation and discovery of the teen's remains earlier this month.

David Bogdanov, 25, made his first appearance Wednesday, Dec. 18, facing a charge of second-degree murder. Bogdanov was arrested the day before in connection to the disappearance of Nikki Kuhnhausen, who was 17 when she went missing in June. Her remains were discovered close to Larch Mountain by a citizen Dec. 7, investigators say.

According to Vancouver Police Lt. Tom Ryan, one of three officials who spoke at a press conference Dec. 18, the department received a report of Kuhnhausen missing June 10 from her mother. Ryan said that Kuhnhausen lived with friends in Vancouver and lost contact with her roommates after leaving with a male, later identified as Bogdanov, in the early morning hours of June 6.

Ryan said the mother told police she and Kuhnhausen rarely went more than a day or two without contact. Following the report, investigators were able to use warrants on Kuhnhausen's social media to identify Bogdanov as who she left with the last time her roommates saw her.



David Bogdanov, 25, appears in Clark County Superior Court Wednesday on a second-degree murder charge in connection with the disappearance and death of Nikki Kuhnhausen, a Vancouver transgender teen whose remains were discovered earlier this month near Larch Mountain.

According to a probable cause affidavit for Bogdanov's arrest, Kuhnhausen had left the apartment late June 5. When she returned to the apartment she was wearing a man's coat and had a bottle of vodka. When she left again she told her friends that the "Russian" male she had been with was going to help her get a cell phone — the affidavit stated she had been using one of her friend's phones to communicate with Bogdanov, unbeknownst to the friend.

A release from VPD stated that cellphone records and social media data from Kuhnhausen and Bogdanov were used to make the connection. In June investigators attempted to contact Bogdanov at residences of family members, the affidavit stated, though attempts to contact him with updated in-



Nikki Kuhnhausen

formation provided by family went unanswered. After issuing a warrant regarding Bogdanov's number, he finally responded to a detective via Snapchat in September, later calling the detective.

Bogdanov confirmed the con-

nection to Kuhnhausen himself in an interview with investigators in October, Ryan explained. During the interview Bogdanov stated he met up with Kuhnhausen in downtown Vancouver, picking her up and providing the coat and vodka bottle, according to the affidavit. Following that first meeting Kuhnhausen sent Bogdanov the address of where she was staying, and he agreed to take her to a residence to get her cell phone.

After arriving at the residence Bogdanov and Kuhnhausen were "chit-chatting" when she revealed she was born biologically male, the affidavit stated. In the interview with investigators Bogdanov stated the revelation made him uncomfortable and he asked

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Hundreds gather to support Trump impeachment

Rally on eve of House vote

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The hundreds gathered at Esther Short Park on the evening of Dec. 17 were likely pleased at the House of Representatives' vote of approval on two articles of impeachment against President Donald Trump the following day.

They congregated in support of the then-imminent vote, waving signs and hearing from a few local activists about why it was necessary to make a significant step that could lead to the removal of the commander-in-chief.

The event brought commotion to the park after dark, with Port of Vancouver Commissioner Don Orange speaking alongside former Washington 17th Legislative District and Clark County Council candidate Tanisha Harris. The rally was organized by two groups, the Vancouver chapter of MoveOn and Indivisible Greater Vancouver (IGV).

Mary Laski, an organizer with the MoveOn group and member of the leadership team of IGV noted significant overlap between the memberships of both groups.

"We're here because the president of the United States is not above the law, and we're trying to make that point," Laski said.

She spoke specifically about Trump allegedly using his power to pressure another head of state to interfere with an election.

The successful impeachment push came after a whistleblower brought to light a conversation between Trump and President of Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky where the whistleblower alleges the U.S. head of state pressured the Ukrainian leader

See **RALLY** on Page A7

Ridgefield's Taco Bell opens

PHOTO BY RICK BANNAN

From left, Pacific Bells CEO Tom Cook, Ridgefield Taco Bell General Manager Melissa Smith, Ridgefield Mayor Don Stose and Discovery Ridge developer Dean Maldonado cut the ribbon on the new restaurant during a ceremony Dec. 18.



State-of-the-art location next addition to Discovery Ridge complex

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It was "taco Wednesday" — not Tuesday — in Ridgefield last week as the much-anticipated Taco Bell started up its kitchen and opened the drive-through window to customers for the first time Dec. 18.

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The Reflector

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Rally

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to investigate a company that employed Hunter Biden, son of Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden, to “advance (the president’s) personal interests,” as stated in the report.

It wasn’t the first time that demonstrators advocated for impeachment of Trump this year, as in June a similar event was hosted. Laski said that rally “was just the beginning” of the movement, later adding she felt support for impeachment had grown locally and nationwide since then.

The Dec. 18 votes on two articles of impeachment, abuse of power and obstructing Congress, were approved along party lines. Clark County’s U.S. Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler, R-Battle Ground, voted against both articles of impeachment, previously stating that neither argument was adequately proven.

“We need to replace her,” Laski said about Herrera Beutler, “and I will be working on that.”

Laski said demonstrators started to gather around 4:30 p.m. with speeches before attendees took to the sidewalks along the park to wave signs advocating for impeachment. She said there were 877 signups for the rally, estimating about 500 to 600 were actually in attendance.

Though “Vancouver” is in the name, IGV has North County residents among its leadership.

“We need to preserve our democracy, (to) abide by the Constitution,” Janet Birgenheier, a Ridgefield resident and one of those North County leaders, said when asked why impeachment was necessary.

Shirin Elkoshairi, La Center resident and IGV leadership team member, said the event was more well-attended than the one in June, where he was one of the speakers. He said he had been a supporter of impeachment since about the time Trump was inaugurated, pointing to allegations of emoluments against the president.

“I think (House Speaker) Nancy Pelosi reached a point where she had no alternative but to pursue an investigation,” Birgenheier said.

Opposition to the pro-impeachment rally, if any, was overshadowed by the crowd of supporters.



PHOTO BY RICK BANIVAN

Clark County activist and former state and county political candidate Tanisha Harris, left, addresses the crowd during a rally supporting the impeachment of President Donald Trump at Esther Short Park Dec. 17.

owed by the crowd of supporters. Elkoshairi said he only saw one truck drive by with a Trump support sign, which could have been a coincidence.

Demonstrators who spoke to The Reflector were fairly confident of an approval of the articles of impeachment that happened the next day, though less so about a successful removal of Trump from office. Following a trial in the Senate, those lawmakers would have to vote by two-thirds for the removal, though based on party lines alone looked unlikely given the Republican majority.

“I think impeachment is sending a powerful message to hopefully have a powerful impact upon the 2020 campaign and influence people to vote to protect our Constitution,” Birgenheier said.

Even if Trump remains in office Elkoshairi said having him officially impeached would put him in a small group of presidents who had



PHOTO BY RICK BANIVAN

An audience listens to speeches as part of a rally supporting the impeachment of President Donald Trump Dec. 17.

been taken that far, now three.

“I think you just can’t let someone continue breaking the law without something (happening),” Elkoshairi said.

Suspect

Continued from page A1

Kuhnhausen to get out of his vehicle and she walked away. Bogdanov denied any sexual contact or discussion of it between him and Kuhnhausen; he indicated “that homosexuality is unacceptable in Russian culture,” according to the affidavit.

According to Bogdanov, that was the last he saw of Kuhnhausen. He said after she left he went to work at a job site in downtown Portland, the affidavit read. During the full analysis of cell phone records investigators were able to track his movements that indicated otherwise. Those records showed after leaving the residence he headed to the area of Larch Mountain and Camp Bonneville, before returning to the residence.

While investigators were trying to corroborate Bogdanov’s involvement with Kuhnhausen’s disappearance, a skull, later identified as hers, was discovered. Clark County Search and Rescue did an extensive two-day search of the scene, collecting a number of items of evidence and human remains — Ryan noted the area was “extremely steep, heavily wooded and (had) a lot of underbrush.”

Washington State Patrol crime lab analysis identified the remains as Kuhnhausen’s, the affidavit stated. A Clark County Medical Examiner advised that Kuhnhausen had died by strangulation; among the remains a ligature was found among hair extensions believed to be Kuhnhausen’s.

The affidavit concluded that after learning that Kuhnhausen was transgender, Bogdanov “became enraged” and strangled Kuhnhausen to death and disposed of her body in the Larch Mountain area.

Investigators attempted contact with Bogdanov again on Dec. 17. He declined to give any further statements and at that point was arrested, Ryan said.



PHOTO BY MARY BROTEN

From left to right, Ariel and Taylor, classmates with Nikki Kuhnhausen at Hudson’s Bay High School, take a moment to speak with the media after the court hearing at the Clark County Courthouse in Vancouver Dec. 18.

part of the department’s major crimes unit, said that it would be up to the prosecutor’s office to determine if Kuhnhausen’s death would be considered a hate crime.

“It certainly may be,” Kipp said, though ultimately that wouldn’t be a decision made by police. Ryan said investigators believed Kuhnhausen being transgender played a part in the alleged killing but couldn’t call it a “targeted” attack at that time.

Ryan noted the investigation was ongoing when pressed for answers on whether or not any other charges would be filed in relation to the case, with reporters asking if anyone else associated with Bogdanov would receive charges.

“There’s still a lot of follow-up to do,” Ryan said.

Bogdanov is currently held without bail. He is scheduled for another appearance in court Jan. 2.

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