

Associated Press reports two enter pleas in Klein case

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Two Alfred University fraternity members have admitted their roles in the beating of a fellow student who later committed suicide. Bradley Calkins, 22, pleaded guilty to third-degree assault, while Thomas Lam, 23, pleaded guilty to second-degree hazing. Both pleas came Thursday during the second day of a grand jury hearing in Onondaga County Court. Calkins participated in, and Lam encouraged, the Feb. 9, 2002, beating of fellow Zeta Beta Tau member Benjamin Klein, whose bruised and cut body was found three days later in a creek behind their fraternity house. Police determined Klein, 21, a junior from Putney, Vt., died of a drug-overdose suicide. Calkins, of Stony Brook, admitted he hit Klein in the head with a boot after tying his hands and feet with duct tape in a hotel room in the Syracuse suburb of DeWitt, during a regional fraternity convention there. Lam, of Hamburg, admitted encouraging Calkins and two other fraternity members to tie up Klein and doing nothing to stop them. The two told the court that Klein, still tied up, was placed in a bathtub with the shower turned on, until he promised he would not leave the hotel room. "We were all afraid that if he left, he would get our fraternity in trouble because he was drinking and telling others about hazing practices in our fraternity," Lam said. A month after Klein's death, the Alfred University board of trustees voted to eliminate fraternities and sororities at the campus. (Editor's note: The trustees' decision came in May, after it received a report from a task force recommending that fraternities and sororities be eliminated because of long-standing problems.) Alfred is 65 miles south of Rochester. (Copyright 2003 by The Associated Press. All Rights Reserved.)