

## Opening statements expected in murder trial for 2012 stabbing of Marine on Barracks Row

By [Keith L. Alexander](#), Published: November 14

Opening statements are scheduled Thursday in D.C. Superior Court in the trial of Michael Poth, a former Marine charged with second-degree murder in a 2012 stabbing of a Marine on Capitol Hill's Barracks Row.

Poth, 21, is accused of the [April 21, 2012, death](#) of [Philip M. Bushong](#). Poth has been incarcerated in D.C. jail since the attack.

At earlier hearings, prosecutors called the attack a hate crime and said Poth hurled a slur against homosexuals at Bushong after he saw him and a friend hugging outside a bar in the 700 block of Eighth Street SE.

Poth's attorney, Bernie Grimm, declined to comment on the case Wednesday, but at Poth's preliminary [hearing in May 2012](#), his former attorney, David Benowitz, said his client was protecting himself during an altercation.

Benowitz, who unsuccessfully argued that the charges should be reduced to manslaughter, said a witness told police Bushong and Poth got into a fight and that Bushong called Poth a "boot," a Marine term used to describe a poor soldier or someone fresh out of boot camp.

Also at the preliminary hearing, a D.C. homicide detective testified that Bushong's friend is gay and that he and Bushong were socializing when Poth walked past them. The detective said that Poth continued walking, and that a witness heard him say: "I'm going to stab someone and cut their lungs out."

At the hearing, Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael Liebman announced that military officials had initiated an other-than-honorable discharge of Poth several months before Bushong's slaying. Poth had tested positive for using synthetic marijuana and had verbally assaulted other soldiers, Liebman said.

Bushong, 23, was a lance corporal in the Marine Color Guard for two years.

Attorneys spent most of Wednesday picking a jury. The case is being heard before Judge Russell F. Canan.

Source: [http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/crime/trial-starts-today-in-fatal-marine-stabbing-on-barracks-row-in-dc-in-2012/2013/11/13/8b4b14a2-4caf-11e3-be6b-d3d28122e6d4\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/crime/trial-starts-today-in-fatal-marine-stabbing-on-barracks-row-in-dc-in-2012/2013/11/13/8b4b14a2-4caf-11e3-be6b-d3d28122e6d4_story.html)

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