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5th Year

So much for investigative journalism

ABBIE JONES
AND JENNIFER CANNON / STAFF
EAST PALO ALTO

A television news crew that inadvertently videotaped two men while reporting on a grass-roots anti-drug campaign Wednesday was chased right out of town, the managing editor of the station said.

The crew of KPIX-Channel 5 in San Francisco went out to videotape baseball fields and recreation sites that a loosely organized community group hopes to revitalize as part of a five-project wish list to offer youth alternatives to drugs.

KPIX Managing Editor Rick Little said the crew became frightened and immediately left the

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scene after one of the two men started racing toward them. The crew jumped in their car and sped away without finishing the report, he said.

The man got into a car and chased the crew to Bayshore Freeway and past five exits before giving up, according to C.G. Grant, a consultant on the community group's campaign.

"What an experience. The reason they came from far away is because the media get tired of reporting about crack and death," she said.

While some speculate the crew may have inadvertently filmed a drug deal, Little said there is no evidence to that claim.

"We have no idea whether it was a drug deal going down or not," Little said.

"It could have been just an invasion of privacy."

The station decided not to air any portion of the segment, Little said.

The crew had come for a press conference where about 50 officials and citizens joined together to outline their priorities for fighting drugs.

Those priorities included offering sports and recreational after-school activities to keep youth involved and off the streets.

While the group was encouraged by the plan President George Bush announced Tuesday, the city's drug problem is not one that can wait.

"If we waited for the \$8 million to trickle down to communities like East Palo Alto we'd have another generation gone by the way side," Grant said.

The priorities included:

- Building a swimming pool.
- Establishing a drug treatment program including both athletic activities and counseling.
- Developing an 4-H style agriculture project.
- Revitalizing and maintaining sports fields.
- Running an after-school sports and recreation program.

The whole program would cost about \$1 million, plus at least \$30,000 annually to maintain the projects.

The city does not have the money and there are no grants on line to ensure the projects come to fruition.

The David and Lucille Packard Foundation supplied a grant of \$10,000 to coordinate that effort and other city programs, Grant said.