



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Pattern of Severe Anti-LGBT Violence Nationwide NCAVP calls attention to recent disturbing and tragic incidents of violence**

**For Immediate Release**

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New York –the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) reports a recent rash of at least 13 brutal and violent hate crimes that have occurred throughout the country on the heels of the murder of 15 year-old Lawrence King in Los Angeles and the brutal beating of Duanna Johnson, both in February of 2008. NCAVP reports that these hate crimes may indicate a frightening trend of increases in both the number and severity of anti-LGBT violence. NCAVP continues to be humbled by the strength and the dignity of these victims and survivors, and their loved ones.

“This is extremely disturbing and saddening. We are witnessing what appears to be an increase in both the occurrence and severity of violence motivated by racism, homophobia, and transphobia,” noted Sharon Stapel, Executive Director of the New York City Anti-Violence Project.

"NCAVP wishes to express our sympathy and solidarity with the victims and survivors of this violence as well as their friends and loved ones" said Quillin Drew with the Equality Virginia Anti-Violence Project.

"We must continue to work to build a society where such violence is not tolerated," said Avy Skolnik, NYC AVP's coordinator of national and statewide programs. "This is not a call for people to hide or to live in fear, but rather a call for people to take notice, to speak out, to not sweep incidents under the rug, and to support and look out for each other."

In a two-month span, from June to July of this year, has documented the following reported incidents:

- June 18, Memphis, TN. Police security camera footage is obtained and released by the attorney for a transgender woman, Ms. Duanna Johnson. The video shows Memphis Police officers beating Duanna Johnson in the booking area of a local jail. The beating took place February after Ms. Johnson refused to respond when officers called her "faggot" and "he-she." One officer punched her with handcuffs wrapped around his knuckles, splitting her skull open. He then maced her.
- June 28, New York, NY. Gay man harassed on subway platform and beaten on Subway after boarding at Christopher Street.
- July 1, Memphis, TN. The body of transgender, African American woman, Ms. Whitaker, is found near a daycare center.
- July 2, Greeley CO. Police Sergeant Kell Hulseby and his son Dan Hulseby are accused of attacking a man they perceived to be gay, beating him bloody with a bottle. A witness to the attack said: "I heard him say 'I'm a Greeley cop and I'm a mean (expletive),' and then he hit him." Kell then allegedly fled the scene. He was put on administrative leave but as of July 9, no charges had been filed.
- July 7, Queens, NY. Father Braxton is beaten while protecting a group of LGBT youth living at Carmen's Place, a shelter for homeless youth that he coordinates.
- July 12, Central New York. A man who is a self-described neo-Nazi is arrested for allegedly breaking into the home of 65 a year-old gay man at midnight while he slept. The victim was able to flee his home before it was torched and completely destroyed by the assailant.
- July 17, Greeley, CO. The body of Angie Zapata, an 18 year-old transgender, Latina is found. She was beaten to death with a fire extinguisher. 31 year-old suspect Allen Andrade was arrested on July 31 and charged with 1<sup>st</sup> degree murder as a hate crime.
- July 17, Dallas TX. Jimmy Lee Dean is beaten in a severe anti-gay assault by two men not far from his home. His injuries were so severe that he was in intensive care

and could not be interviewed or identified until July 22. The suspect is not currently being charged with a hate crime.

- July 25, upstate NY. A man from out-of-state was visiting family and was severely beaten by two men who shouted anti-gay slurs while kicking him, breaking 10 bones in his face.
- July 25, St. Helens in the UK. Two men attack 18 year old Michael Causer in St. Helens as he was walking along a road. He died on August 2<sup>nd</sup> after a week in intensive care.
- July 27, Knoxville, TN. Two people killed and seven wounded in a shooting that took place at a Unitarian church. Shooting appears to be at least partially anti-gay motivated.
- July 29, Staten Island, NY. A large group of men verbally and physically assaulted, and then stabbed, a man they perceived to be gay.
- Ongoing, Cleveland, OH. Escalating harassment (for nearly 8 years) of a gay male couple by anti-gay neighbors.
- Ongoing, PA. Escalating, harassment (for nearly 20 years), of gay male couple in rural PA town, including gunfire, vandalism, stalking, acts of intimidation and indifference from local police.

The above are all incidents against people either identifying as or perceived to be, lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. However, we have also documented the following incidents in the same time period, which were motivated by racism and anti-immigrant sentiment:

- July 3, Seattle, WA. Edward Campbell, 46, allegedly entered a convenience store in and began yelling anti-Muslim and anti-Arab slurs at the store clerk. Campbell then smashed a beer can against the clerk's face, causing severe cuts around the victim's left eye.
- July 14, Northport, AL. Eight hate crimes in one trailer park community in Northport, Alabama. Six victims are Black, two are Latino. Acts include 9 gun shots into a vehicle, the letters 'kkk' being etched into another car and spray painted on homes along with other racial slurs, and slashed tires. So far, two arrests have been made.
- July 30, Bellingham, WA. Police arrested Todd Grant Hawley, a self-described member of the Aryan Nations, for slurs and threats of violence against two Black men. The men sought refuge in a nearby shop and Hawley tried to follow them in. The shop keeper blocked him from entering and Hawley allegedly flashed his Nazi flag tattoo at him and tried to fight him, but was arrested.
- June – July, Queens, NY. At least three separate incidents of violence against Sikh students at three different schools. Violence included hair cutting, tearing off turbans, and physical assaults, some with weapons. In 2004, the Dignity in All

Schools Act overcame a veto by Mayor Bloomberg and was passed into law, but is still not being implemented in NYC.

NCAVP believes that the 18 incidents noted above are likely only a sample of the actual number of violent incidents that have occurred and that the bulk of these incidents still go unreported because many victims fear retaliation or fear being outed as LGBT.

NCAVP applauds district attorneys and police who are willing to call out hate crimes as such and we encourage others to follow in their footsteps. We also encourage people experiencing hate violence, harassment, vandalism, bullying to contact NCAVP or one of our member programs by calling 212.714.1184 or emailing us at [info@ncavp.org](mailto:info@ncavp.org).



The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) supports local LGBT organizations in their work to end violence in all its forms against LGBT people and communities. [www.ncavp.org](http://www.ncavp.org).

**Safe is not just about sex.** For more information about cruising and dating safety for transgender and gender non-conforming people, check out our safe dating tips at [www.avp.org](http://www.avp.org).

A note to journalists from NCAVP:

NCAVP applauds the attention that some of these incidents are receiving in the local and national press and encourages continued coverage. Many news outlets have made a sincere effort to portray victims fairly, but we are saddened by some of the mis-characterization of transgender people by some news sources. NCAVP member organizations work with victims everyday who are struggling to heal from trauma in the face being blamed for the violence they experience at the hands of someone else. We encourage journalists to use language that is both un-biased, accurate, and based on the individual's self-described identity, in covering incidents related to anti-LGBT violence.

NCAVP recommends the following when reporting about transgender people

- Avoid referring to transgender people as "really a (man or woman)." The term "transgender woman" is an appropriate term to use for someone who identifies as a woman but was assigned the male gender at birth and the term "transgender man" is appropriate to use for someone who identifies as a man but was assigned the female gender at birth.

- Avoid sensationalizing the very difficult and personal decision that many transgender people are faced with about how or when to disclose personal information about their genitals to a potential sexual partner. Examples of sensationalizing language include: "sexual secret," "shocking secret," "duped," "fooled," "shocking discovery," to name a few.
- Avoid justifying "the trans panic defense" in news articles (i.e. avoid statements such as "his uncontrollable rage stemming from the discovery that she was really a man"). Much like "gay panic," which many defendants of anti-gay violence have used (violence resulting from a man being hit on by another man, for example), such statements sound very victim-blaming and imply that the violence was excusable or understandable.
- Avoid victim-blaming phrasing, such as: "Police believe that the man may have been attacked because he is gay." Instead, pair the action with the actor: "Police believe the suspect may have attacked the victim out of anti-gay bias."
- And lastly, it is considered best practice to refer to someone as the gender they identify (or identified with when alive) rather than their legal gender or the gender they were assigned at birth.

For questions relating to these tips, contact [info@ncavp.org](mailto:info@ncavp.org) or 212.714.1184.