



Colorado Anti-Violence Program and National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs

Press
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Colorado Anti-Violence Program & National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs Responds to Verdict

Allen Ray Andrade Found Guilty of First Degree Murder and Bias Motivated Crime
Greeley, CO - April 22, 2009

The verdict today brings us mixed emotions. We are reminded that we have lost yet another young member of our community to hate. The fact that Angie's killer was found guilty of first degree murder and a bias motivated crime shows that this murder was taken seriously. This verdict sends the message that violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer people is unacceptable. We applaud the Weld County District Attorney for making Colorado a leader in showing that violence against the LGBTQ community will not be tolerated.

We must not leave today thinking that this is an isolated incident or that our work is done. In 2008 alone, there were at least 19 reported anti-LGBTQ murders in the United States. We remember Lawrence King, Duanna Johnson, Latiesha Green, Sanesha Stewart and Simmie Williams Jr.

Since the time of Angie's murder, we at the Colorado Anti-Violence Program and many others have witnessed the mourning of the Zapata family, the Greeley community, the transgender community and the greater lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer and ally communities. We have also witnessed incredible perseverance, strength and love unite people as they began to organize to raise awareness and educate others to prevent this from happening again.

Fear, misunderstanding or hatred of LGBTQ people does not justify violence. It takes incredible courage to be who we are in a world that makes us invisible, forces us to hide, and condones violence against us. Angie was not only a loving daughter, sister, aunt and friend but a beautiful young woman courageous enough to be herself.

Throughout this trial we've heard many myths about transgender people including attempts to blame Angie for her own murder. We witnessed the defense continually focus on the behavior of the murder victim, rather than on the violent actions of her killer. The fact is that transgender people are faced with a Catch 22. Being out about one's transgender status often means

experiencing a tremendous amount of violence, the blame for which is often placed on the individual for being out. However, not speaking about one's transgender identity often means being stereotyped as deceptive and yet again, blamed for the violence that one experiences.

Implicit throughout this trial was the dangerous assumption that outing oneself as transgender guarantees safety. On the contrary, in some instances, outing can increase the risk of violence. Many transgender people struggle to know when and how to talk about their bodies and gender. This can be extremely difficult and scary to decide when and with whom to have this conversation. CAVP and NCAVP stand by the truth that the right to live free from violence is not conditional. It is a right granted to all of us regardless of whether or not we identify with the gender we were assigned at birth.

Ultimately, this is a human rights issue. Transgender people, like all people, have a right to self-determination, safety and respect. We call on our lawmakers to pass legislation that funds restorative and transformative justice, victim's rights and accountability programs for offenders as well as community-based prevention initiatives and public education that works to counter the stereotypes and misinformation at the root of hate violence. We call on the people of Colorado and the rest of the country to stand up, speak out, and organize to create safer communities where we are all free to live our lives without the fear of violence.

About Colorado Anti-Violence Program

The Colorado Anti-Violence Program has been dedicated to eliminating violence within and against the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer communities in Colorado, and providing the highest quality services to survivors since 1986. CAVP provides direct services including crisis intervention, information, and referrals for LGBTQ victims of violence 24 hours a day. The CAVP also provides technical assistance, training, and education for community organizations, law enforcement, and mainstream service providers on violence issues affecting the LGBTQ community. The most common types of violence they respond to are hate crimes and partner abuse, as well as cases that involve random violence, sexual assault, and HIV-motivated violence. LGBTQ victims of crimes or those who have witnessed a crime are encouraged to call our 24 hour free and confidential hotline at 303-852-5094 or 1-888-557-4441 or visit our website at <http://www.coavp.org/>.

About the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs

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.

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.

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