

July 1, 2009

Statement from Geo Vaughn, NYC Artist, survivor of hate violence

In August of last year, I was beaten on the streets of New York City, simply because I am gay.

It all began when I asked for directions from a group of men. Instead of directing me to the place I was looking for, they called me a faggot, and began to taunt me. Fearing for my life, I thought I could defuse the situation by staying quiet, and walking away, but that proved no help. Before I could be given a chance to save myself, I was knocked to the ground with a punch to the ear by one of the men, and within seconds, the rest of them joined him by spitting, stomping, kicking, and punching me while I lay in the fetal position on the pavement. I can still feel the heat from them piling on top of me.

I repeat, I was beaten because I am gay.

I used someone's phone to call 911, but as I waited for help, my attackers saw me on the phone with the 911 operator, ran back towards me, and beat me again, this time, up against a parked car.

The police arrived within seconds arresting 2 of the men. I was taken to the precinct where I was treated with much care and respect by the officers there. However I waited close to 8 hours for detectives from the Hate Crime Task Force to arrive because they were busy investigating another hate crime committed that same night. The wait was painful, and torturous, being that it delayed me from receiving much needed medical attention. Because of that, combined with the rise in violent Hate Crimes, reported today I am personally asking for more funding for departments such as the Hate Crime Task Force, on a city, state, and federal level.

Many cities including NYC have marketed themselves as a "great place to live" to the gay, lesbian bisexual and transgender community. Well, now that we are here, what are you going to do to keep us safe?

Thank You
-Geo Vaughn