

# COMMUNITY ALERT



**May 7, 2010**

## **AVP outraged by verdict in Hakim Scott's trial; demands public education around hate violence**

AVP is outraged that Hakim Scott was acquitted of murder and hate crime charges for his part in the brutal attack that led to the death of Jose Sucuzhanay. The jury instead handed down a manslaughter verdict. Scott was also charged with attempted assault for chasing Romel Sucuzhanay with the same bottle that Scott broke over the Jose's head.

The attack occurred at 3:30 am on Sunday, November 30, 2009 at the intersection of Bushwick Avenue and Kossuth Place in Bushwick, Brooklyn as the two Ecuadorean brothers walked home arms linked, returning from an evening spent at a social at St. Brigid's Roman Catholic Church and later, a local bar, La Vega. Scott and another attacker, Keith Phoenix, shouted anti-gay and anti-Latino epithets during the attack. The verdict for Keith Phoenix is expected to be handed down today, May 7, 2010 by a separate jury that deliberated his case. Phoenix beat Jose over the head so severely he cracked his skull.

Two Latino men walking with arms linked incited homicidal hatred. This verdict is a bold indicator of the lack of understanding of what hate crimes are, what they mean to victims and their loved ones, and to the effect they have on communities. Some of the last words Jose Sucuzhanay heard were full of vitriol and hate spewed by two men who targeted them based upon nothing more than their perceived identity, yet this was not a clear enough indication to a jury that they should have handed down a hate crime verdict. Something is terribly wrong with how this society sees the rights to safety for LGBTQ people.

"Through education efforts, we can counter these messages and promote safety and respect for all. Without such education, this type of violence will continue and only escalate" said Kim Fountain, AVP's Deputy Director, "AVP firmly holds that the city and state must invest in public education around hate violence. The violence carried out against the Sucuzhanays sent the message that members of LGBT and Latino communities are not safe. The verdict only amplified this message."

If you or anyone you know has been a victim of hate violence, we encourage you to contact our **24-hour bilingual (English/Spanish) hotline at 212-714-1141** and speak with a trained counselor to seek support. We have also started a new LGBTQ support group for survivors of hate violence. To find out more about this support group call our main number at 212-714-1184. All services are free and confidential.

More information about the New York City Anti-Violence Project can be found at our [website](#) and [Facebook page](#). Additional safety tips can also be found on our [website](#). Please forward this e-mail to your friends and urge them to stay safe.