



## **NATIONAL ALERT: ANTI-LGBTQ PICK-UP VIOLENCE ON THE RISE**

**April 29, 2010**

The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) has tracked an increase in pick-up violence targeting lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) community members. The 39 member organizations of NCAVP have also documented an increase in the severity of the crimes committed. The primary targets appear to be men who use websites, chatlines and phone applications to meet other men for dates.

In Washington, D.C., NCAVP member Gays and Lesbians Opposing Violence (GLOV) issued a [community advisory](#) after the recent murders of Brian Betts and Anthony Perkins, both of whom may have been targeted through pick-up sites or chatlines. In Phoenix, Mark Woodland was robbed and murdered on Saturday, April 24<sup>th</sup>, allegedly by a man he met on the iPhone application Grindr. "The perceived anonymity of online cruising can also create a barrier to reporting pick up violence for fear of being 'outed' as LGBTQ, being re-victimized, blamed for the assault or reinforcing homophobic myths," said Joe Montoni, Co-Chair of GLOV, "however, we encourage survivors to report any attacks because everyone has the right to stand up against violence."

The [New York City Anti-Violence Project](#) (NYC AVP) has documented over 25 pick-up crime incidents in 2009, most of which involve internet dating sites, including adam4adam and craigslist. The types of reported crimes range from theft and drugging, to sexual violence and murder and it has been reported that some assailants are working in teams.

NCAVP offers the following dating safety tips to empower LGBTQ people to prevent and resist pick-up violence. Karyn Lathan, AVP Program Coordinator at the [One Voice Community Center](#) in Phoenix states, "We extend our condolences to Mr. Woodland's family and friends and encourage LGBTQ people to review these critical steps to keep themselves safer when dating or hooking up."

NCAVP encourages you to share these tips with your friends, loved ones and communities. To report an incident or locate an anti-violence program in your area, please contact [info@ncavp.org](mailto:info@ncavp.org) or our 24-hour, bilingual (English/Spanish) hotline at 212.714.1141.

### **Key Safety Tips**

Safe is not just about sex. The following tips may help you stay safer when meeting people online or on the phone. People that commit violence and crime tend to target those they

perceive to be vulnerable and less credible to law enforcement. Please see [our safer dating guide](#) for NCAVP's complete tips.

- **Trust your gut instinct – if it doesn't feel right, exit the situation.**
- **Get a face picture and phone number before meeting in person. Share this with a trusted friend.**
- **Meet in public, close to your destination, before going to a private place.**
- **If you invite the person to your place, take steps to protect valuables and leave items that could be used as weapons out of sight.**
- **If you go to the other person's place, tell at least one person the exact address where you will be and for how long.**
- **Set up a silent alarm by setting a time to text or call your friend when the date is over.** Typically, the agreement is if you do not call/text at the time agreed upon, the friend should *call you*. If you do not answer or if you answer and do not say the code word, your friend should call the police or another trusted resource.
- **Have an exit strategy – know how you will leave if your date makes you feel uncomfortable or unsafe.**
- **Make careful choices about your clothing: avoid wearing anything around your neck and wear comfortable clothing and footwear.**
- **If you would like to speak with someone about an incident, no matter what happened, call NCAVP at 212-714-1141.**

These are safety tools that have been useful in some situations. **Use the ones that fit best for you. Follow your instincts, and remember that you do deserve to be safe.**

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***The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) addresses the pervasive problem of violence committed against and within the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) and HIV-affected communities. NCAVP is a coalition of programs that document and advocate for victims and survivors of anti-LGBTQ and anti-HIV/AIDS violence/harassment, domestic violence, sexual assault, police misconduct and other forms of victimization. Further, NCAVP supports existing anti-violence organizations and emerging local programs in their efforts to document and prevent such violence. NCAVP is a program of the New York City Anti-Violence Project.***