

NCAVP ALERT



National Advocacy
for Local LGBTQH Communities

MEDIA ALERT

May 08, 2012

Media contacts: Chai Jindasurat, 212-714-1184
Lisa Gilmore, 773-661-0734

NCAVP Update: April reports of violence affecting LGBTQH communities in the media in the United States

- 7 murders and 13 total incidents reported in April

The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs ([NCAVP](#)) is concerned by reports of violence impacting lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and HIV-affected (LGBTQH) communities across the United States that were reported during the month of April, 2012. This month, NCAVP is including incidents that occurred in March 2012 which were reported to NCAVP in April, 2012. **In total, 12 incidents were reported in the media in California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Michigan, New York, Nova Scotia, Ohio, Tennessee, and Washington, DC.**

March 22, 2012: Ronald Champagne, 50, [used a gay slur and rammed](#) his Cadillac into the vehicle of another man, 60, in **Auburn, Maine**. The man had stopped his vehicle to arrange items in it when Champagne drove up in his Cadillac prior to the incident. The Maine Attorney General's Office has filed a complaint against a Turner in response to this incident.

March 24, 2012: Luis De Los Santos [fatally shot](#) a transgender woman, 23, and shot and wounded a second transgender woman, 20, in **Riviera Beach, Florida**. Riviera Beach police arrested and charged De Los Santos with aggravated battery with a firearm in response to these attacks. NCAVP released a [facebook note](#) to alert our communities to this news in response to these incidents.

March 26, 2011: A student came back to his dorm room to find a racist and homophobic note saying, "[f—got n—ger f—k off](#)" and bleach poured in his two top dresser drawers at Berry College in **Rome, Georgia**. Campus organizers have started circulating a petition to create an LGBT organization, LISTEN, on campus in response to this incident. The Student Life Council and then-President Scott Colley approved LISTEN in 2004, but the college's board of trustees reversed the decision and denied the organization official club status. NCAVP member [SpeakOut Georgia Anti-Violence Project](#) released a statement denouncing this incident and raising awareness about their online reporting campaign.

March 28, 2012: Richard Watson and Micah Denson [attacked and killed](#) Dimetrez Griffin, 37, after attempting to rob him in his Leland Hotel home in **Detroit, Michigan**. During the course of the robbery, the two men strangled Griffin and stepped on his neck, killing him. Watson and Denson were arrested and are being charged with first degree murder. Griffin was a well-known local LGBTQ activist. Detroit police and prosecutors have connected these two men to a string of robberies that target gay men through chat sites. Griffin's friends and family organized a memorial service on Saturday, April 7th to commemorate his life. NCAVP worked with its local member program, [Equality Michigan](#), to release a [facebook note](#) alerting our communities to this incident.

April 3, 2012: Detroit police found Coko Williams, 35, a transgender woman, [shot to death](#) outside a Parkhurst home in **Detroit, Michigan**. Detroit police have not released information regarding suspected offenders or further details about this case. NCAVP member program, Equality Michigan, released a statement expressing support and condolences to Williams' friends and family. NCAVP released a [breaking news alert](#) on April 3 in response to this homicide.

April 6, 2012: John Reed, 54, [fatally shot](#) his longtime intimate partner Jeffrey E. Caldwell, 56 in **Columbus, Ohio**. According to reports Reed alleges that Caldwell was beating him and was fearful for his life when he shot Caldwell. Reed called 911 to report the incident and told a dispatcher that Caldwell "was killing me, he was trying to kill me." Franklin County Municipal Court has charged Reed with murder. NCAVP released a [breaking news alert](#) in response to this homicide. NCAVP member program, Buckeye Region Anti-Violence Organization ([BRAVO](#)), released a statement in response to this incident.

April 16, 2012: Chicago police found Paige Clay, a 23 year old transgender woman of color, [dead from a gunshot wound to the head](#) in the West Garfield Park neighborhood of **Chicago, Illinois**. Chicago authorities have not released further information regarding this incident. NCAVP released a [breaking news alert](#) in response to this incident. NCAVP member program, [Center on Halsted](#), released a statement calling on community members to work together to create more safety for those most impacted by violence. Clay was a well known figure in Chicago's ballroom scene. Taskforce Prevention and Community Services has organized a community event for Tuesday, May 1st titled [Justice for Paige](#) in memory of Clay. Family and friends of Clay have scheduled a [wake and funeral](#) for her for Friday, May 4th.

April 16, 2012: Kenneth Weishuhn, 14, [completed suicide](#) after enduring severe anti-gay bullying including bullying at school, cyber-bullying, and receiving anti-gay death threats in **Paullina, Iowa**. Weishuhn had recently come out as gay and his classmates created an anti-gay facebook group in response to his coming out. Weishuhn's family and friends [organized a vigil](#) on Friday, March 20th in his honor. Local organizations [One Iowa](#) and [Iowa Safe Schools](#) released a [statement](#) responding to Weishuhn's death calling for the elimination of bullying.

April 17, 2012: Jason Lopez, 22, [fatally shot](#) his boyfriend Tory Curtis when he found Curtis at the home they shared with a third, unidentified man in **Brooklyn, New York**. Lopez then shot himself fatally. The unidentified man hid while the shooting took place and has survived. The New York City Anti-Violence Project (AVP) released a [breaking news alert](#) and has reached out to the New York Police Department, City Council Speaker Christine Quinn's office, and community organizations in response to this incident.

April 17, 2012: Andre Noel Denny, 32, used homophobic slurs, [beat, and killed](#) Raymond Taavel, 49, after Taavel attempted to intervene in a dispute between Denny and another man outside Menz bar in **Halifax, Nova Scotia**. Local authorities have charged Denny with second-degree murder. Hundreds of community members [gathered for a vigil](#) outside the bar in memory of Taavel, who was a well-known local gay activist, on April 17th.

April 21, 2012: A group of men [used anti-gay slurs and attacked](#) Eric Unger, a student at Illinois State University who identifies as gay, after leaving a party in Normal, Illinois. Unger called the police following the attack and local authorities transported him to Advocate BroMenn Medical Center. Unger sustained scrapes and bruises around his face, broken teeth, and a fractured jaw as a result of this attack. Normal Police have stated that an investigation is ongoing.

April 21, 2012: Chase Mason Kelley, 18, [punched a transgender individual](#) until the person lost consciousness in **Memphis, Tennessee**. Memphis Police also report that Kelley's brother attempted to run over the survivor with his Jeep but missed. Jonathan Cole from the [Tennessee Equality Project](#) has [responded](#) by stating that the federal Matthew Shepard/James Byrd Junior Hate Crime law may be applicable in this case.

April 21, 2012: Michael Joseph Poth, 20, a United States Marine used a pocketknife to [fatally](#) stab Marine Lance Cpl. Phillip Bushong, 23, after Poth called him an anti-gay slur in **Washington, DC**. District police have charged Poth with second-degree murder. Four of Bushong's friends gathered at the scene of the incident on April 21st to mourn and remember Bushong. Authorities have not released information on whether they are considering this incident to be hate motivated.

April 28, 2012: An unnamed suspect [fatally shot](#) Brandy Martell, a transgender woman, in her car following an altercation between Martell, the suspect, and another unnamed person in **Oakland, California**. NCAVP and local member program, Community United Against Violence, released a [breaking news alert](#) in response to this murder in which CUAV expressed heartbreak at the news of Martell's death. Community members organized an [emergency vigil](#) in honor of Martell at the location where she was shot on April 29th. Oakland Police are investigating Martell's murder as a potential hate crime.

April 30, 2012: Alex Wiles, a North Carolina resident, videotaped himself denouncing same-gender marriage and [shooting](#) a sign opposing North Carolina Amendment One with a rifle near his home in **North Carolina**. Amendment One would add a ban on same-gender marriage to the North Carolina constitution. North Carolina residents will vote on Amendment one on May 8th, 2012.

According to NCAVP's [report](#) *Hate Violence Against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and HIV-Affected Communities in the United States in 2010*, there was a 13% increase in reports of anti-LGBTQH violence between 2009 and 2010. Additionally, NCAVP's 2010 [report](#) *Intimate Partner Violence in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and HIV Communities* documented 38.1% increase in reports of LGBTQH intimate partner violence between 2009 and 2010. NCAVP believes that together communities can prevent and end violence impacting LGBTQH people and calls on community members, anti-violence organizations, and public officials to join efforts to end violence within and against LGBTQH communities.

Contact Information for Organizations Responding to Incidents

Buckeye Region Anti-Violence Organization (BRAVO)

866-86-BRAVO

www.bravo-ohio.org

Center on Halsted

773-871-CARE

www.centeronhalsted.org

Community United Against Violence

415-333-HELP

www.cuav.org

Equality Michigan

866-962-1147

www.equalitymi.org

Iowa Safe Schools

515-243-1221

www.iowasafeschools.org

New York City Anti-Violence Project

212-714-1184

www.avp.org

One Iowa

515-288-4019

www.oneiowa.org

SpeakOut Georgia Anti-Violence Project

404-707-0864

Tennessee Equality Project

615-669-8057

www.tnep.org

NCAVP is providing all information available regarding these reports and is not responsible for the complete accuracy of the specific details pertinent to allegations, police investigations, and criminal trials. Initial reports of these incidents come from media reports of LGBTQH violence and not direct service provision from NCAVP member programs. NCAVP has reached out to local organizations in these areas and is offering assistance to support their anti-violence efforts.

NCAVP works to prevent, respond to, and end all forms of violence against and within lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and HIV-affected (LGBTQH) communities. NCAVP is a national coalition of local member programs, affiliate organizations and individuals who create systemic and social change. NCAVP is a program of the [New York City Anti-Violence Project](http://www.avp.org).

Available for print in whole or in part without further permission.

###