

July 1, 2009

Statement by Joseph Holladay, survivor of a hate violence incident

My name is Joseph Holladay. I am a former New Yorker and Upper East Sider, having just moved to Boston four and have months ago where I now live. Last week, I was in the City on business. This happened to coincide with Gay Pride Week. I was visiting my friend on the Upper East Side.

Around 4am on Saturday morning, I escorted another friend outside so she could hail a taxi. After she left, I decided to smoke a cigarette before returning upstairs to the apartment. Suddenly, I was attacked by some men. They were calling me faggot and started to beat me - - they beat me hard and unconscious, leaving me lying in a pool of blood. The commotion attracted many eyewitnesses who heard and saw what happened. 911 was called. I was taken away in an ambulance.

The next thing I remember was gaining consciousness at New York Presbyterian Hospital. The gruesome details of what happened in the Emergency Room are for the files. But as you can see, I have many stitches and an extremely deep gash on my forehead. I have numerous bruises and cuts on my body. I am in severe physical and mental pain.

I did nothing to these people, except to be who I am.

Fortunately for me, I have very some good friends and supporters who sprang into action once they heard what happened to me. They were able to reach out on my behalf through a variety of different connections to see that my case was given attention, and that steps were quickly put in motion to find these perpetrators who violated me.

This effort was lead by The Village Voice, my former employer, who posted and updated a blog about what happened to me. This caused much attention from other media. As well I received immediate support from the office of Senator Tom Duane, Speaker Christine Quinn, and of course the NY City Anti-Violence Project.

I know the road to justice and healing will be a long one. I expect it will be filled with delays, frustrations and politics. However the good news is I am in conversations with the NYPD Hate Crimes Tasks Force, NYPD Detectives, sketch artists and my local politicians.

We'd all like to think that this kind of anti gay violence will not happen again but it will. We know this from the Violence Report issued today and many other testimonials.

But the fact is, as reported today Hate crimes against gay citizens have increased in the last year. There is much to do!

GLBT liaisons have been put in place to interface with the NYPD, advocacy groups are assisting, our Mayor and the 3 candidates running for District Attorney marched in the Gay Pride Parade on Sunday. All of these are steps in the right direction. But we need more steps, quicker steps and more joining the march. Everyone deserves to live in peace and to be who they are. The best way for us to help is to make sure that every victim of hate violence gets justice and that we put policies and laws in place that will support these efforts and to keep making sure our voices are heard.

I sincerely thank Senator Duane, Speaker Christine Quinn – your phone call last night meant the world to me – I love you, the Detectives from the 19th Precinct and the Hate Crimes Task Force, and the Anti Violence Project and all of my friends, The *Village Voice* and anyone I may be forgetting,

Thank you.