

# Anti-Gay Murder Study Released

A national coalition of anti-violence groups, including the North Carolina Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality has released a report on anti-gay homicides across the country. The report, released December 20, indicates that not only are anti-gay murders on the rise, they are becoming increasingly brutal.

Nearly 60 percent of 151 anti-gay slayings reported in 29 states involved "extraordinary and horrific violence" of a sort "fueled by rage and hate," said the study, coordinated by the New York City Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project.

While guns are used in 68 percent of all murders in the country, only 26 percent of anti-gay murderers shot their victims. Knives, baseball bats, clubs and hammers were the weapons of choice, the study said.

"The level of violence in these homicides is really gruesome," said Bea Hanson, a spokeswoman for the Anti-Violence Project. "There's no reason why somebody needs to stab somebody more than 100 times."

The study defined a killing as gay- or lesbian-related "if the victim's sexual orientation appeared to have played a role." Fifty-one percent of such killings have been solved, compared with 65 percent for all homicides, the study said.

The study also said police were "indifferent to gay-lesbian-related homicides" and operated from "a blame-the-victim perspective."

The report included two murders that occurred in North Carolina, both of which resulted in the apprehension and sentencing of the perpetrators. But a footnote in the report stated that the authors of the study "received numerous other reports [from North Carolina] about unresolved homicides, but [the incidents] were not included in the report because they lacked sufficient documentation, or more often, because law

enforcement refused to provide data on these 'open' cases."

According to an appendix of the study, eight homicides were reported by the North Carolina Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality.

NCCGLE Executive Director Kenda Kirby also told *The Front Page* that the group is investigating more than half a dozen homicides that have been reported to the Coalition since July 1994, but lacks the data to make a definitive categorization as anti-

gay crimes in at least four of the murders.

The New York City Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project said the figures in the study represent only a small percentage of hate murders

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## Helms Introduces Anti-Legislation

In the first indication that anti-gay extremists in the new Republican-controlled Congress may target lesbian and gay Americans in discriminatory legislation, Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) has introduced two bills that would promote hate speech and discrimination against federal workers. The Helms bills mark the first two pieces of anti-gay legislation introduced in the 104th Congress, according to an analysis by the Human Rights Campaign Fund (HRCF).

"In a move that contradicts the Republican promise to keep focused on the business of the nation, Jesse Helms has begun to execute his own private contract on gay Americans in the first few days of the 104th Congress," said HRCF Executive Director Elizabeth Birch. "This is the first indication that Jesse Helms intends to use his newly acquired power in Congress to pursue his anti-gay obsession, a clear breach of the Republican promise to address issues that are important to Americans. Voters who changed the face of Congress have overwhelmingly rejected discriminatory measures of the ilk that Helms is proposing."

The first bill, numbered S.23, would give a special exemption from workplace non-discrimination policies to government employees who voice prejudices against lesbian and gay

coworkers. S.25 would target lesbian and gay employees for discrimination by denying their employee organizations the same rights to free association and free speech guaranteed to other employee groups. Twenty-two employee groups for lesbian and gay federal workers have formed, similar to groups representing African-Americans, Latinos and women in the federal work force.

"This legislation would promote hate speech and discrimination against federal workers," said HRCF Public Policy Director Daniel Zingale. "Americans overwhelmingly believe that no one should be singled out for discrimination in the workplace. Helms' hate legislation flies in the face of this fundamental American value."

Following a growing trend in the private sector, at least 17 major federal agencies have included lesbian and gay people along with other workers in their non-discrimination policies. No federal law protects people from being fired or otherwise discriminated against in the workplace on the basis of sexual orientation.

"The federal government is only now catching up to corporate America, where half of the Fortune 1000 companies have non-discrimination policies protecting their gay and lesbian employees," said Birch, who recently left a high-level management position at Apple Computers to

lead the largest national lesbian and gay equal rights organization.

"A growing number of successful corporations also have gay employee groups and diversity training. If successful companies like Apple and Xerox provide equal protection to their employees, the federal government would do well to follow their example."

A poll of members of Congress by HRCF last year on their own employment practices, and found broad bipartisan support for the principle that gay and lesbian people should not be singled out for discrimination in the workplace. 82 Republicans and 231 Democrats — including majorities of both parties in the Senate — confirmed that they do not discriminate in their offices on the basis of sexual orientation.

In addition, a post-election poll of voters in the November election found that majorities of Republicans, Democrats and Independents support equal rights in the workplace for lesbian and gay people. In a random survey of 800 voters conducted Nov. 8 and 9 by the independent polling firm of Mellman Lazarus Lake, Inc., 70 percent said gay people should not face unfair job discrimination — with 64 percent of Republicans, 71 percent of Independents and 77 percent of Democrats supporting the idea.

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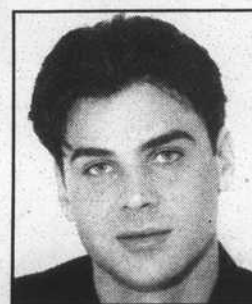
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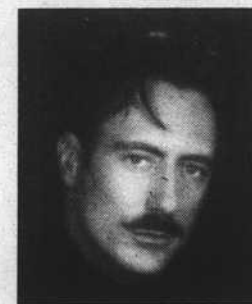
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