

Tucson Gay Museum

Gay Hate Crimes in Arizona Time Line

This information includes public, local, state, and federal government reports of Gay Hate Crimes aka Anti-LGBTQIA+ violence and murders within the state of Arizona as reported in and by local jurisdictions, Arizona police and state forensic agencies, United States national news sources, Arizona news sources, county coroners reports and autopsies, public and government court records, Federal Bureau of Investigations reports, records and files, and various local police, fire, paramedic, and coroner reports since 1974

1974 - August 30 – Gay man Frank A. Zedar is beaten to death, and his body is set on fire. His dead still burning body is found by a Tucson Police Officer who sees the smoke from his burning body near North Campbell Ave and E. Fort Lowell from over one block away while the officer is already dispatched on another call.¹⁰

¹⁰ *Arizona Gay News*, "Suspect held in Illinois in '74 Tucson slaying," October 14, 1977, v. 2, Issue 41 and "Confession gets slayer 5-10 years," October 23, 1977, v.2, issue 51, pg. 2.

1975 – A Gay man is beaten to death by teenagers at a South Tucson bar. The teens allege the dead Gay man had merely flirted with them inside the bar. The teenagers are never charged with any crime and they are all quickly released by the investigating officers after their Gay Hate Crime Murder. Under Arizona's law at the time since the teens are not legally adults at the time, their names are forever sealed from all public records and all access by the local news media of both newspapers and television.

1976 – Paul Simon, a University of Arizona student who University of Arizona Police had falsely stated Simon had no student identification and then turned Simon over to Pima County Sheriff's Deputies for disturbing the peace is just hours later strangled, beaten to death, and parts of his body torn off, mutilated, and likely eaten by 20 year old prisoner William T. Crouch, while the two young men are in a very small one man Pima County Jail cell. The jail staff testifies later that construction noise from a nearby work area kept them from hearing any sounds of the murder which took place over a long and bloody period of time. Some of Paul Simon's body parts are never found. Crouch's father, a wealthy Texas businessman and his attorney intervene. In an agreement his son is found innocent by reason of insanity by the judge, he is released into his father's custody, and is taken back to his parents' home in Texas. Crouch's attorney claims he murdered the university student out of his alleged fear of a homosexual advance. However, Crouch himself is already known to have a history of seeking out and forcibly attacking and raping males.

1976 - June 6 – Richard J. Heakin Jr., a 21-year-old Gay Man and American Airlines Reservations Agent visiting from Nebraska on vacation, is beaten to death outside in the parking lot by 10 to 12 local

teenage high school students as he is leaving the Stonewall Inn Tavern, a Gay bar at 2921 N. 1st Avenue in Tucson, Arizona. Richard Heakin was enjoying his vacation that night relaxing with his friends on the last night of his vacation visit in Tucson.

As Mr. Richard Heakin and others are leaving the bar just after midnight, up to thirteen (13) teenage high school students, aged 15 to 17 years old who had been drinking alcohol and taking drugs all night, take turns attacking Richard Heakin beating him to death until he is unrecognizable in the parking lot.

Only four (4) of the teenagers are arrested and charged for the Gay Hate Crime Murder. All of the teenagers are in the end given only the simplest of probation and each go right back to their parent's homes and back to school the day after their release).

The teenage murderers of Mr. Richard Heakin later testify they had gotten bored of cruising up and down Speedway Boulevard in their cars after drinking alcohol/using drugs all night and not being able to find a fight on Speedway Boulevard that night.

The teenage high school students then decide to drive their cars to the Stonewall Tavern Inn on 1st Avenue to "Fuck Up Some Queers."

Although four of the teenage attackers are initially charged by Tucson Police with Premeditated Murder in the Gay Hate Crime Murder, the charges are all quickly dropped down to involuntary manslaughter, and then dropped down again to only simple probation at home until their 21st birthdays.

In court the teenage boys are merely asked not to drink alcohol again by Pima Superior Court Presiding Judge Birdsall who disregards the entire overwhelming amount of legal evidence and all the testimony of the actual witnesses during the Premeditated 1st Degree Murder phase of the trial.

Richard Heakin's death brings together a large part of Tucson, Arizona's LGBTQ+ people while State, National, and International News publicity from all around the United States and around the world finally helps them push the Tucson City Council to pass a law prohibiting hiring and housing discrimination on the basis of someone's sexual orientation.¹¹ *Arizona Daily Star*. "Justice not Served," staff editorial, October 23, 1976, 10/1. and "Sentence 12 *Arizona Daily Star*. "Justice not Served," staff editorial, October 23, 1976, 10/1. and "Sentence protested by gay group," October 24, 1976, 1 / 2

1976 September – A Gay man who did not want to reveal his name later is kidnapped, beaten, raped, robbed, and escapes on "A" Mountain in Tucson, Arizona from two males. A *Tucson Gay Newsletter* publication article reports that "a Male Member of the Gay Community was badly beaten up on "A" Mountain The two attempted murderers who attacked our Gay brother... aged about 22..[and] 24." Police were notified.^{14 11}

¹⁴ *Tucson Gay Newsletter*, "Bad News," September 29, 1976, v.1, Issue 1, pg 2., the newsletter encouraged others to contact it with any similar experiences to save one of your friends a similar experience"

1977 - April – The Associated Students of University of Arizona in Tucson makes a formal apology to the Gay Student Organization for "prejudicial and derogatory

remarks” made against a Recognized Student Organization. The threat occurs after the University of Arizona’s on campus Gay Student Organization (G.S.O.) group has requested \$660.00 for its peer counseling program and for its public relations costs that semester. On April 22, 1977 a University Of Arizona Student Government Senator named Semmens then announces to the entire Student Government Organization during its open public session, “*I Think We Ought To Take The \$660.00, Buy Guns, And Shoot All The Queers.*”¹⁵

¹⁵ *Arizona Gay News*, “Semmens apologizes but GSO calls on him to resign due to bias,” May 5, 1977, v. 5, issue 10, pg.1. see also *Arizona Daily Wildcat*, April 26.

Semmens himself is never censured by the University of Arizona Student Government, keeps his position in the university student government, is never investigated by the University of Arizona Police, and goes on to graduate as if nothing has ever happened.

1977 - October 23 – The Metropolitan Community Church (M.C.C.) of Phoenix, Arizona after continued harassment, its windows being broken, major thefts including the church’s large heavy Church Organ, is the victim of an Arson Fire after the congregation has all left from the Sunday evening services, and the building is empty. No one is ever charged in any of the crimes.¹⁶

¹⁶ *Arizona Gay News*, “MCC Church – Phoenix, Victim of Arson,” October 20, 1977, v. 2, Issue 43, pg. 3. “The church has been subject to vandalism in the past with thefts of the church organ and all its chairs as well as the usual harassment of broken windows and obscene phone calls from time to time.”

1980 - April – Stepps Gay bar in Pima County, Arizona just north of Tucson located on Oracle Road is vandalized with spray painted Anti-Gay Hate Graffiti (“Gays Go Home”). Stepps Bar then quickly responds by erecting a large sign outside of their business that states “We Are Home.”¹⁷ *Arizona Gay News*, March 8, 1980, v.5, Issue 10, pg. 5

1980 - March – The Phoenix, Arizona private residence of the Secretary of the group Citizens for Constitutional Rights (CCR) is burglarized. The groups Gay Hot Line Answering Machine System and most of the other Office Equipment is all stolen in the robbery, and the building is vandalized with Anti-Gay Hate Graffiti.¹⁸ *Arizona Gay News*, “CRC’s Gay Line Vandalized,” March 8, 1980, v.5, Issue 10, pg. 5

1981 - June – Larry Mantz, a Phoenix, Arizona Gay Man, is beaten, then strangled almost to death, then robbed in what an *Arizona Gay News* article reports as a “Queer Bashing.” The newspaper lists a description of the assailant and announces a community fundraiser to help cover the injured man’s doctor’s expenses sustained in the nearly fatal Gay Hate Crime attack.¹⁹ *Arizona Gay News*, “Phoenix Man in Queer Bashing,” June 19, 1981, v. 6, Issue 24, pg. 2

1983 - February – A Tucson Gay Man, was lured, knifed, tied up, beaten with a car shock absorber, left in a pool of blood, had \$1,500.00 of his personal property stolen, and his car stolen by 24 year old Larry J. Daley who had just been released from the Arizona State Prison for other robberies and beatings he had been convicted of before. Daley was arrested on charges of attempted murder, armed robbery, aggravated assault, kidnapping, and grand theft. Daley boasted to the arresting Pima County Sheriff's Deputies and later to Pima County Jail employees that he had committed and gotten away with many other numerous assaults and robberies in Phoenix, Prescott, and Tucson. [trial held May 31, 1983] - 19.5 19.5 *The New Paper*, "Letters," April 1, 1983, v. 1, Issue 4, pg. 3

1984 - September 22– The 'Homo-Tel', a vacant closed former two-story motel in Tucson, Arizona located next to The Fineline Gay bar is set on fire by an Arsonist on the night of September 22nd 1984. The fire almost spreads to and burns down the Fineline bar.²⁰ *The Weekly Observer*, "Arson Fire at Homo-Tel", September 26, 1984, v. 1, issue 11, pg. 1

1984 - October 30-1984 – As 'Derrick' was walking across the parking lot to the Fineline Gay Bar at 101 W. Drachman in Tucson, Arizona 4-5 men suddenly jumped from behind a wall and tackled the Gay man to the ground. The attacking men then stole his wallet, his watch, and all items in his pockets. Then the attackers beat and broke the man's knee, tore his leg ligaments, broke his leg bone and others, caused bruising and bleeding requiring emergency transport to a local hospital along with immediate emergency surgery and hospital bills of thousands of dollars. A fundraiser was held by the Fineline Bar and R Productions on Saturday December 15, 1984 at 9:00PM to raise money for the injured man's medical bills. ^{20b} *The Weekly Observer*, "Benefit For Attack Victim Saturday," December 12, 1984, pg 2

1984 - October 30– Charles Bush, a nurse at the Benson Hospital in Benson, Arizona and openly Gay Man, 34 years old who resides in St. David, Arizona is robbed, repeatedly stabbed to death, his body is dumped into some shrubs miles away near the Freeway Fourth Street Rest Area in Benson, Arizona, and his car is stolen by two teenage boys who were hitchhiking he had picked up.

Blood stains are found in Bush's home, it has been ransacked with sellable items being taken, and just a few days later police in Van Horn, Texas arrest two teenage boys as they are trying to sell Charles Bush's personal belongings at a swap meet. Both the teenage boys aged 13 and 16 years old allege to the investigating police that Mr. Charles Bush had made a sexual advance toward them so it was legal to rob Charles Bush, murder Charles Bush, to hide the dead body of Mr. Bush, and then to steal his vehicle and drive off to Texas using his credit cards and money in his wallet.²¹ *The Weekly Observer*, "Gay Related Murder in Benson," November 21, 1984, pg. 1

1984 - October 28 – The Fineline Gay bar's parking lot becomes the occasional site of physical attacks that include Gay Hate Taunting and Baiting, robbing each victim's wallet, watch, ring(s), bracelets, neck chains, and any cash in the pockets of some of those entering or leaving the bar alone at night. Most of the attacks go unreported. One such man on October 28th only known as 'Derrick' is physically attacked and then robbed by a group of men in the parking lot of the Fineline bar in Tucson, Arizona. He reports the crime to the Tucson Police Department.²² *The Weekly Observer*, "Benefit for Attack Victim Saturday," December 12, 1984, pg. 2

1984 – November [mid] - A Tucson Lesbian and Gay Pride Committee member was shot by an unknown sniper while entering the Fineline Gay Bar at 101 W. Drachman in mid-November 1984 for a meeting. The case remains unsolved. [1984 was the TLGPC's committee's first year anniversary/Tucson pride events efforts had started and failed and disbanded and started again and failed again were renamed over the years] 22b *The Weekly Observer*, "Tucson Lesbian and Gay Pride Committee" article, December 19, 1984, Issue 22, pg. 3

1985 - June 10 – Johnny Collins, identified by the Tucson Police Department and the local Tucson, Arizona media as a Bisexual Transvestite, is last seen alive on May 31, 1985 after leaving the Graduate, a Gay bar on University Avenue. Johnny Collins beaten bludgeoned body is later found near La Cholla Road in Pima County northwest of Tucson, Arizona.²⁴ *The Weekly Observer*, "Homicide Victim," June 12, 1985, pg. 3.

The Johnny Collins Murder case remains unsolved.

1984 - December – Debbie, a bartender at the Fineline bar in Tucson, Arizona, and Desiree, a bartender at Colette's West Bar, are both physically assaulted by a man making Anti-Lesbian Slurs in the Fineline bar's parking lot. Debbie requires stitches on her lower forehead, and she suffers a broken bleeding nose along with two black eyes. Desiree sustains a broken bleeding cheek bone. Both are bleeding and traumatized from the Anti-Lesbian Hate Crime Attack. At the crime scene the Tucson Police Officers give the attacker a simple written citation, and then release him on his way.²³ *The Weekly Observer*, "Tucson Lesbian and Gay Pride Committee Report, v.1, Issue 20, December 5, 1984, pg. 1

1989 – A young Gay Man is Attacked and Beaten severely outside of a Gay bar on Grant Road in Tucson, Arizona in the early evening by several Pima College Students.²⁵ From January 27, 2005 Community Forum notes (Mark was a speaker at the forum), Lori Gershick.

1992 – Elton Naswood, a Gay Navajo Man from Window Rock, Arizona is beaten and then hit numerous times with a rock by four men outside of a Gay bar in Phoenix, Arizona. Naswood does not go to the hospital for care or does he report the crime to the Phoenix Police Department.²⁶ Pemberton, Mary. "TWO-SPIRIT": Victims of gay-bashing seek solutions at HIV/AIDS conference," *Associated Press*, <http://www.nativeout.com/>, http://www.adn.com/life/native_culture/story/7699692p-7610642c.html

1993 - August 22 – Candido Sanavria is strangled and then stabbed to death in his Tucson, Arizona home by Richard Bell. Bell first stabs Candido with a knife from the kitchen until the blade breaks, then Bell strangles Mr. Candido to death with the cord of the man's telephone. After the first knives blade breaks, Bell goes back into the victim's kitchen, gets another knife and then starts stabbing Candido Sanavria many times all over again. The murderer Richard Bell and the crime scene are drenched in blood.²⁷ *Associated Press State & Local Wire*, "Man who killed gay gets 20-year prison term," September 10, 2000.

1993 - Michael Anthony Senecal, is hacked with a machete, then beaten to near death, and left for dead by a carload of young men in Phoenix, Arizona.²⁸ Lacey, Michael, "To the cops, some crimes just seem less important than others," in *Phoenix New Times*, July 28, 1994. <http://www.phoenixnewtimes.com/Issues/1994-07-28/news/columns.html>

1994 - June – Michael Despain, a 24-year-old Gay-Transgender man who sometimes goes by the name Rolanda is first Beaten and then Murdered in an Arson Related Gay Hate Crime Murder in Phoenix, Arizona.²⁹ Lacey, Michael. "Why this young man's death matters," in *Phoenix New Times*, August 11, 1994. http://music.phoenixnewtimes.com/Issues/1994-08-11/news/columns_4.html Lacey, Michael, "To the cops, some crimes just seem less important than others," in *Phoenix New Times*, July 28, 1994. <http://www.phoenixnewtimes.com/Issues/1994-07-28/news/columns.html>

Below are excerpts of *Arizona Republic* and *Phoenix New Times* newspaper articles providing a deeper insight:

[He is dead and he is cremated, but the tragedy of Michael Despain's short, troubled life is not over. In death, Michael has achieved an awful notoriety as Phoenix's first hate killing, a crime category law enforcement began tracking in 1990. Michael's memory, however, is now the hostage of a police department which ignored the gay bashing that led to this young man's murder.

After examining police records, it is obvious that the cops knew all along that Michael Despain, 24, was the victim of a homophobic beating on the evening he was burned to death (To the Cops, Some Crimes Just Seem Less Important Than Others," July 28). The police had interview after interview, some secretly conducted with video cameras, others captured on tape recorders, in which witnesses recounted the assault on Michael that occurred just prior to the arson that burned his body beyond recognition.

On the night of his death, two people, using a pipe, threatened to kill Michael because he was a fag. This terrible motive for Michael's death made no impression upon the Phoenix police.

Michael's homicide was initially listed by police as merely one more violent crime in South Phoenix.

It was, of course, so much more. If white men in sheets lynched a black man, no one would dare ignore the issue of race by dismissing the hanging as simply another brutal incident. But that is precisely what happened in Michael's death; the homophobic nature of his murder was swept under the rug.



Though required by federal and state statutes to specifically note hate crimes, police let this killing slip off the radar screen.

When local community leaders met with police administrators, the activists were completely in the dark about the evidence the cops already had that the homicide was rooted in gay bashing. The police kept this critical information to themselves.

Naively, like good citizens, Mark Colledge, Jeff Ofstedahl and other gay activists brought the police one flimsy lead--an overheard conversation--that they thought suggested Michael was murdered because he was a homosexual. All the men asked was that the Phoenix Polices follow up on their information. The police refused.

When I first wrote about Michael's murder, I was shocked that the police would not bother to track

down the lead. I just assumed the police would look into every tip in a murder case. But now it all makes sense.

Instead of responding to the gay activists' concerns, the cops led Colledge and Ofstedahl around by their noses. Police administrators grudgingly reclassified the paperwork listing the incident as a hate crime, but continued to ignore the gay bashing.

The cops did not bother to pursue the tip from Colledge and Ofstedahl because evidence of gay bashing as the motive for the homicide would interfere with the neat and tidy bow the police had used to wrap up this case.

The cops had already arrested a teenager for Michael's death. Observed leaving the scene of the fire, this kid had no credible motive for killing Michael. Nonetheless, the 16-year-old was the designated fall guy.

But the 16-year-old wasn't the only one seen leaving the site of the blaze. He was accompanied by the two gay bashers who'd attacked Michael and threatened to kill him. Of the three, the two bashers had the only motive for torching Michael, but only the kid with no motive was arrested.

Not surprisingly, the case against the teenager was so weak that he was ordered released.

Michael Despain's last hours on Earth were not spent playing Scrabble. It was a night of reeling, wild emotions and reckless acts that are difficult to explain even when you know that crack cocaine was present.

Michael rented a bedroom in an apartment occupied by Denise Street in Phoenix Arizona, who was a crack abuser who could not even recall the victim's last name when questioned by police.

The evening of his death, Michael and Denise were joined by her friends, Omar Wells and Lonnie Smith.

According to law enforcement's own files, this is what happened that night: The three men got into a heated fight culminating with a threat to shove a pipe up Michael's ass.

Denise, who witnessed the brawl, told police that Michael was threatened with the pipe because he was gay.

After being roughed up, Michael fled at approximately 3 a.m. to the nearby apartment of Denise's sisters.

Both women told the cops that the two hoodlums often harassed Michael, going so far as to steal his food from in front of him because "he was gay." Michael was in tears the night of the attack. He wanted his antagonists to leave him alone. The two women returned to Denise's place, where they asked Michael's tormentors to leave.

As the two thugs departed, they told Michael they were going to kill him.

Outside, in a nearby field, Omar and Lonnie ran into Denise's brothers, Jermaine Kelly and the 16-year-old, Tyrone Davis.

Jermaine told police that Omar and Lonnie both warned that they intended to get Michael.

Tyrone would tell his sisters the same story, but then deny it when questioned by the police.

For some unexplained reason, Omar and Lonnie were readmitted into the apartment where Denise and Michael lived. We may never know why. One of the toughs was Denise's lover, which may explain it. Maybe it was the drugs.

Omar and Lonnie claim the dispute with Michael settled down, and, as the sun came up, everyone crashed. Denise and Michael were upstairs in their respective bedrooms, while Omar and Lonnie flopped in the living room.

At approximately 10:30 the next morning, Denise woke up with smoke filling her apartment. She escaped out a second-story window and watched from the sidewalk as Michael Despain was burned to death.

Neighbors saw Omar Wells, Lonnie Smith and Tyrone Davis, together, leaving the scene of the fire.

The day of the blaze, Detective Ed Reynolds applied for a search warrant. On their affidavit, the cops, in their own words, spelled out the gay bashing that preceded Michael's death.

"According to Denise Street, Omar Wells and Lonnie Smith dislike Mike because they feel he is a transsexual. Omar and Lonnie got into a fight with Mike, pushing him several times and threatening to kill him . . . ," wrote Detective Reynolds.

In other words, when the police themselves had to explain to a judge what this case was all about, the cops, in plain English, described it as gay bashing.

But Omar and Lonnie, though initially detained, were not charged in this homicide. Instead, the police booked Tyrone. The cops arrested the teenager based upon nothing more substantial than allegations by, of all people, Omar and Lonnie.

These two tell the same story when it comes to fingering the 16-year-old. Omar and Lonnie said their friend Tyrone showed up at Denise's town house at about 10 a.m. For no apparent reason, the teenager immediately tried to set his sister's carpet on fire, and when the rug would not burn, he torched the curtains.

All three then departed the burning apartment without a thought for the two people, Michael and Denise, asleep upstairs.

The problem with this remarkable story is that nowhere in the extensive police record is there a single, credible explanation about why Tyrone would want to burn Denise's town house down, kill Michael Despain and take a chance on murdering his own sister.

The closest the cops get to a rationalization for buying Omar and Lonnie's self-serving concoction is that neighbors had also seen Tyrone leaving the scene of three other fires, two in nearby fields and one in an abandoned apartment.

The suggestion is that Tyrone is an arsonist. The trouble with this information is that in each and every instance, the neighbors also saw Omar and Lonnie departing the scene with Tyrone.

All three of these guys might enjoy playing with matches, but only Omar and Lonnie had threatened to kill Michael Despain.

Omar and Lonnie had to tell the cops something to explain why Tyrone would commit such an inexplicable act.

This is what they came up with: Tyrone said he was going to be paid \$3,000 for torching his sister's place.

This is an incredible fairy tale. One look around these threadbare projects and it is obvious that no one here has seen \$3,000 in one place in a very long time. If the arrest of Tyrone Davis meant that the cops got the wrong man, the jailing did at least clear the books.

This was a homicide on the wrong side of the river. Michael Despain died in a low-income housing tract in a fire that didn't merit a second thought in the press. The cops have enough to do without obsessing over crimes no one gives a damn about.

In fact, the slate on this one was wiped clean so fast that Newell Despain, Michael's dad, told me the cops never bothered to mention to him that his son was the victim of gay bashing the night he died.

"The police didn't tell me anything about that," said Newell Despain, catching his breath. "Are you sure?"

Michael's mother is separated from Newell. She lives in Prescott, and did not know anything other than that her son had perished in a fire. Breaking down in tears, Karen Despain said she'd never heard of Omar Wells and Lonnie Smith. In a world with any sense of decency, no parent would get this horrifying information from a columnist.

I called Newell and Karen Despain to find out more about their boy. No one else seemed to know much about Michael.

What they told me only made things worse. Some folks are dealt a better hand in life than others; Michael got cards no one could play.

After being beaten and abused as a toddler, Michael was abandoned. Newell and Karen adopted the boy when he was 6. "The state told us he had problems," said Karen. The authorities did not overstate the case.

Michael Despain was retarded. Whether it was grade school, the Boy Scouts or the Boys Club, Karen said her boy could not cope, nor could these organizations deal with him.

"He was a loving child with a sense of humor, but he went through what all handicapped children go through with people's meanness," said Karen.

While he was articulate, he could not take care of himself. Finally, he was hospitalized. His doctor told Karen the boy was a hydrocephalic.

Michael eventually spent years in group homes. Though his mother and father both thought Michael needed a sheltered environment, when their boy came of age, no one had the power to keep him in a structured setting. "A year ago, he decided he was gay," said his mother. "I tried to explain the consequences of living on his own, but he wanted to experiment."

The state, no longer entitled to protect Michael from himself, armed him with a disability check. It was just enough money to buy the retarded boy his freedom, and, finally, his death. The predators pounced quickly on Michael. His mother explained that her son found himself in a physically abusive relationship with another man. Karen Despain had begun the difficult legal effort to get guardianship of her son.

"When we gave these people their civil liberties, people like Michael lost their safety," said his mother.

Karen Despain carried in her purse, every day, a letter from a child psychiatrist describing her son's complex problems. Whenever she became discouraged about the difficulty of getting legal custody of her grown boy, she would take the letter out and read it to herself.

The day her ex-husband called and told her that Michael was dead, Karen Despain took the letter out of her purse for the last time and put it in a final resting place. She does not ever want to read it again.

"I knew something was going to happen to Michael," she said. "I used to talk about it with his case manager. We both thought Michael would get one of life's little bounces, something that might bring him to his senses . . . not this." And Karen Despain, who has talked so bravely about her son, can go no further without crying.

"I don't want him hurt anymore, even in death. He was hurt so much when he was alive. I'm 90 miles away; I trusted the police to do their job." @rule:

We do not know so terribly much about Michael Despain. He saw a want ad in a paper advertising a room for rent, and perhaps it seemed like a haven from an abusive relationship.

It is not very likely that Michael Despain ever had the time to grasp clearly the danger lurking in his new neighborhood.

He called his mother on June 2 to tell her about his new home. Seven days later, he was dead.

Even these thin scraps of biography were unknown to the gay leaders who met on three separate occasions with police administrators, hoping to prod the authorities into investigating the possibility that the arson/homicide was a hate crime.

Nor did the community leaders have any thought that the police already knew full well about the gay bashing of Michael Despain. The homosexual and lesbian activists simply brought to the police a somewhat credible allegation from a television reporter. Wouldn't the police please follow up on the tip?

No, the police would not.

Gay leaders met again with police brass after my first column on the Despain homicide and, once more, they were confronted with the question that the cops had been throwing up to them from day one: We already have the perpetrator, Tyrone Davis, in jail; why does it matter if the murder is investigated as a hate crime? Why, indeed?

Many of you who are reading this column have made it clear that you ask the same question. Others are more direct. You write in your letters that you are exhausted by the whole notion of gay victims. The very idea offends your religious and moral sensibilities.

But I cannot believe that any of you actually tolerate feral packs of man-boys preying upon the weak.

And, no, it is not enough to simply arrest the Tyrone Davises of this world. Or the Omar Wellses and Lonnie Smiths.

There must be a proper entry in the ledger.

By tracking crimes, we can stay ahead of trends. We can also decide how to respond to problems--like gangs--that might otherwise go unaddressed. But there is more to keeping track of hate crimes than simple law enforcement efficiency.

I have a friend whose grandmother is nearing 100. To this day, nearly 30 years after her son's death in Vietnam, she still wells up with tears because our government was unable to produce her boy's body.

There is no peace for survivors until there is a final accounting. Until we know the truth, no matter how bad the truth is, we do not rest.

We have a fundamental yearning to lend order and to make sense of our tragedies.

Likewise, when the tragedy of violence without provocation occurs, it disturbs our very being.

Such acts must also be tallied and ordered.

This is how we understand ourselves.

From the first moments of life, we make judgments on how our hands are placed upon our children, whether in love or in discipline. We are particularly concerned about the innocent.

And the victims of hate crimes are innocents.

Anyone who is attacked because of his age, color, gender, nationality, religion and, yes, because of his sexuality, is an innocent.

Every bit as innocent as your child.

Hate crimes are not acts of greed or lust.

The victims have nothing we covet. They cannot behave in any way to protect themselves. The targets of hate cannot change their skin color, their god or whom they love to suit the rest of us.

They are truly defenseless, because it is their very life, not their acts, that provokes violence.

Now, you may strongly disagree with this point of view. The fact of the matter is, however, that homosexuals and lesbians should not have to go to the police with their hats in their hands begging for help in these matters. The law is their law, too.

The police had no right to hide the gay bashing of Michael Despain from the boy's parents. The police had no right to hide this violence from gay and lesbian leaders. And less than 24 hours after the cops' insistence that the hateful nature of this killing was irrelevant because the perpetrator was already in jail, Tyrone Davis was released for lack of evidence.

He joined the other two punks--Omar and Lonnie--on the streets of South Phoenix, where the number of helpless victims has been reduced by one.

"I spoke with Michael on the phone the night he died," said his mother. "I told him, 'I love you and I care about you, Michael.'

"Michael told me the owner of the building was going to throw the other renters out."
But the owner did not move fast enough. Denise, the crack head, was already inviting Omar and Lonnie into her apartment as Michael spoke to his mother.

"Michael met people easily," said Karen. "He was so very open. But he was easily intimidated and very vulnerable."
This is the boy who was burned so badly that when a police officer first saw the body, he thought it was the cadaver of a black man.

Michael was exactly what Omar Wells and Lonnie Smith needed to sharpen their canine teeth on: a retarded, gay man/child lately given to women's dresses and a pretend identity as Rolanda.

Karen has more comforting memories of her feckless Michael. She talks of the church full of people at his service, the joyous chaos of an old paper route that was too much for her boy, the deep happiness even a troubled life brings to a mother who cares.

She is also the kind of Christian who worries about the well-being of Omar, Lonnie and Tyrone.

Karen Despain got to tell Michael she loved him on his last day. Not many mothers can say as much.

But she still has questions the police need to answer before she rests.

The fact is, next Wednesday Aug 17, Karen would surely have called Michael to wish him a happy 25th birthday. And I don't believe that she herself knows how she will get through that day.

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1995 - December 2 – John Pinto is last seen leaving The Graduate Gay bar located on University Boulevard near Stone Avenue just after 10PM on December 2, 1995. Mr. Pinto is later found Beaten to Death the next morning. The crime has not been solved.³⁰ 30 Avara Valley Police Department records

2000 - October 31 - Justin Fidelis Enos, 54-year-old Gay man, is Roped & Dragged Behind A Horse and Then Murdered with a Shovel on the Gila River Indian Reservation because the murders merely thought he "Danced Like A Girl"³¹ 31 *Associated Press*, "Man pleads guilty to murder of gay man Phoenix," August 14, 2002 [online] Dorian C. Brown pleaded guilty Tuesday in federal court to second-degree murder in the death of Justin Fidelis Enos on Halloween 2000. GPAC. "Plea in Murder of NV Man Killed Because He "Danced Like a Girl"," August 13, 2002.<http://www.gpac.org/archive/news/notitle.html?cmd=view&archive=news&msgnum=0423>

2000 - February – Fabian Padilla is called Derogatory Anti-Gay Hate Names and then

Beaten Repeatedly outside of the Plush bar in Tucson, Arizona by the member of the Tucson Fire Department Franchot Opela. 32 13 32 *Associated Press*, "Firefighter's sentence in hate crime deemed light by some," July 11, 2001 [online]

2000 - February 6th – A young Gay Male University of Arizona Student is stabbed outside of the Rainbow Planet Coffee Shop, a Gay Establishment on 4th Avenue in Tucson, Arizona . More than a thousand LGBTQ+ & Allied Community Members respond by staging a March along the 4th Avenue in Downtown Tucson ending at the University of Arizona Campus "Mall." 33 33 at Rainbow Planet Coffee Shop, 606 N. Fourth Ave, Bustamante, Mary. "Gays and Jews Top Targets of Hate Crimes in Tucson," in *The Weekly Observer*, February 25, 2004, pg. 1

2001 - December –An act of Anti-Gay Vandalism and Anti-Gay Hate Graffiti at their home is reported in Bridgeport, Arizona by two new residents of the area while hosting a house warming party. Anti-Gay Hate Crime words "NO FAGS" and a picture are spray painted on the driveway of their home. 34 34 *Associated Press*, "Yavapai County Sheriff investigating possible hate crime," December 27, 2001. The victims, new residents to the area, were hosting a party when guests reportedly discovered the road in front of the house had been spray painted with a picture and a slur. The picture had two stick figures within a circle and a slash across the circle plus the words "No Fags."

2002 – February 5th – F.C. Martinez a young Arizona born Navajo Transgender Two-Spirit or *nadleehi* who is 16 years old is attacked and beaten to death by 18 year-old Shaun Murphy in Cortes, Colorado on a city street while Martinez is vacationing there. 35 35 TG Crossroads Staff, "Murphy Pleads Guilty to Murder of F.C. Martinez, Sentencing Set for May 16," TG Crossroads, February 8, 2002. <http://www.tgcrossroads.org/news/archive.asp?aid=168> In a court affidavit, investigators alleged that 18-year-old Shaun Murphy, who apparently did not know Martinez, encountered him on a Cortez street June 16, the night Martinez was last seen alive. According to the affidavit, Murphy was later heard "bragging" to friends that he had "Beat Up A Fag."

2002 - February 16 – Amy Soos, a transgender woman from the Salt River Pima Indian Reservation is found on a Phoenix roadway after being beaten to death. The excessive bloody violent method Soos is murdered indicates to the Police Homicide Investigators that the murder may likely be a Gay Hate Crime Bias/Hate Motivated Murder. 36 36 Southern Poverty Law Center. "for the Record," in *Intelligence Report*, Winter 2003, pg. 46

‘Information Sought in Phoenix Crimes’ [Gay & Lesbian hate crimes & murders in Phoenix Arizona]- Article – In collaboration with the Phoenix Police Department... AZ Hate Crimes Task Force... Arizona Human Rights Fund [AHRF]... is seeking information on the homicide of Amy Soos a Transgender Raymond Soos. Raymond's body was found in the desert area near... *Observer* publication 13 March 2002 Issue#921 Page 2

2002 - March 3rd – Alejandro Ray Lucero, a Transgender Hopi person is strangled to Death in Phoenix, Arizona with such excessive violence and in a location that indicates that his murder is likely a Hate Crime Bias Hate Motivated Murder. 37

³⁷ Southern Poverty Law Center. "for the Record," in Intelligence Report, Winter 2003, pg. 46

More information is sought for the homicide of Alejandro Ray Lucero, a Transgender male to female. Alejandro's body was found on March 3 [2002], 6:45AM in the alley near 18th St and Thomas Road. *Observer publication 13 March 2002 Issue#921 Page 2*

Tucson Gay Museum

2002 - June 12th – Philip Arthur Walsted, a 24-year-old Tucson, Arizona Gay Man is Robbed and then Beaten to Death in Tucson by a recently prison paroled burglar from the Arizona State Prison System and self-proclaimed Skin-Head Nazi David Higdon using a metal baseball bat while his former girlfriend listens to music in the murderer's truck. Higdon is sentenced to the rest of his natural life in prison after a huge volume of letters for a Life Sentence Without The Possibility Of Parole from Tucson, Arizona and all around the United States are mailed into the Judge.³⁸

³⁸David A. Higdon was sentenced to life in prison (3/28/05) with no chance of parole for beating Philip Arthur Walsted to death with a baseball bat, Walsted was found June 12, 2002 on East Fifth Street and North Hoff Avenue. *Echo*, April 7, 2005, 10 (editor) and Bustamante, Mary. "Gays and Jews Top Targets of Hate Crimes in Tucson," in *The Weekly Observer*, February 25, 2004, pg. / 38.1 See Article with 3ea photos in *Observer aka Tucson Observer aka Weekly Observer* 24 Nov 2004 Issue 1062 Pages#12-13 'While Tucson has a progressive reputation, the 2002 death of Philip Walsted serves as a reminder...'

2002 - June – The Wingspan GLBT Community Center is vandalized in Tucson, Arizona when persons unknown tear out metal flag poles ten (10) feet above the sidewalk and steal the Rainbow and other flags from the front of the organizations building located downtown on 6th Street in Tucson. ³⁹ ³⁹ Everett-Haynes, *LA Monica*. "Area's gay community center vandalized," in *Tucson Citizen*, Wednesday, June 26, 2002.

2003 - August 27 – A 37 year-old Gay Man is lured out of the Yard Dog Saloon Gay bar in Tucson, Arizona located at 2449 N. Stone Avenue and then attacked by five (5) men who steal his shoulder bag, wallet, and money and then fracture the Gay Man's arm. Tucson Police are quick to record the attack as a Gay Hate Crime. The attack is reported to local Federal Bureau Of Investigations (FBI) office and its agents in Tucson, Arizona. ⁴⁰ ⁴⁰ *Associated Press*. "Police investigate possible hate crime," Tucson September 23, 2003.



2003 - September 16 – The Wingspan Community Center is once again vandalized with Hate/Anti LGBT graffiti which is carved into the front door during the afternoon while the facility is open to the public.

2003 – A local Christian religious group, Protests against and Verbally Harasses both the Gay Youth and the Staff outside of the EON LGBTQ Youth Center in Tucson, Arizona. 14

2004 - Jheri Davis, a Navajo Man from Chinle, Arizona, is Taunted and then Seriously Physically Attacked while visiting Phoenix, Arizona. The attackers use a baseball bat and a large machete, while they are Taunting Davis with Anti-Gay Hate Crime Slurs as he was also being told that he Was Going To Die by the three young Navajo men from 16 to 21 years old who were offering him a ride. Mr. Davis injuries include his wrist being broken, his knee cap shattered, and the back of his head being split open. The attackers later receive merely from 1 to 5 years in the Arizona State Prison for the attempted murder of Mr. Davis. ^{41 41}Pemberton, Mary. "TWO-SPIRIT: Victims of gay-bashing seek solutions at HIV/AIDS conference," *Associated Press*, <http://www.nativeout.com/>, http://www.adn.com/life/native_culture/story/7699692p-7610642c.html "They called me a Queer, a Faggot," Davis said. "They said I Should Die." Davis' wrist was broken, his knee cap smashed and the back of his head split open. Jheri Davis spent two days in a Trauma Center of a Hospital in Maricopa County, Ariz. When he got out, he looked up the local prosecutor. The perpetrators, ages 16-21, received between one and five years in prison.

2004 - January 13th – Mark Fontes, a young Gay Man, is found beaten and unconscious from a Gay Hate Crime in Tucson, Arizona behind the IBT's Gay bar located on 4th Avenue. Mark Fontes head injury leaves the young man with no memory of what happened to him. Groups of LGBTQ+ people hold Candle Light Vigils, a Protest March down 4th Avenue of the city, and show other support of Fontes. ^{42 42} Found on North Hoff Avenue in the same area near IT's Bout Time, a Gay bar at 616 N. Fourth Ave. ["Fontes unable to recall what happened", Bustamante, Mary. "Gays and Jews Top Targets of Hate Crimes in Tucson," in *The Weekly Observer*, February 25, 2004, pg. 1

2004 - April – Large amounts of Anti-Gay Graffiti is spray painted at an abandoned property near Interstate 10 and clearly visible to drivers on the freeway in Tucson, Arizona. ^{43 43} Swedlund, Eric. "Anti-gay graffiti stirs concern," in *Arizona Daily Star*, July 21, 2004, B1.

2004 - April – Julie Melson, 38 and Suzanne King, 32 are beaten by bar patrons, while King's dress is ripped and pictures are taken of her exposed breast while the bar's patrons chant Anti-Lesbian Slurs and make crude Anti-Lesbian comments at both of them outside a Scottsdale, Arizona bar. ^{44 44} Laxson, Toni. "Couple claim hate crime," in *East Valley Tribune*, Saturday, April 17, 2004.

2004 - June 18th – Mark Fontes, a young gay man in Tucson, Arizona is threatened by a young man With a Gun while Anti-Gay Slurs and Hate Based Remarks are being directed toward Fontes in a Tucson residence. ^{45 45} Swedlund, Eric. "Man may be victim of second hate crime," in *Arizona Daily Star*, Saturday, June 19, 2004, B4

2004 - July – Two incidents in the middle of July are reported in which persons unknown spray-paint an Anti-Gay Slurs at the downtown EON GLBT Youth Center and a Nazi Swastika at a GLBT-Oriented Church ^{46 46} Swedlund, Eric. "Anti-gay graffiti stirs concern," in *Arizona Daily Star*, July 21, 2004, B1.

2004 - August 25th – A 26-year-old man in Tucson, Arizona is physically attacked while being called Anti-Gay Slurs by two acquaintances in the alley behind the Coffee House on the Northwest side of Campbell Avenue and Grant Road. ^{47 47} AVP files.

2004 - October 29th – U.S. Army Private First Class Kyle Lawson, a young 19 year old Gay Man from a rural area in Missouri is physically assaulted and his nose is broken by a fellow soldier and credit card scammer because Lawson is Gay while the two soldiers are at an off-base party in Sierra Vista, Arizona apartment building. A female civilian employee Lawson worked with had just ‘Outed’ Lawson at Fort Huachuca to the other soldiers in his military unit. After numerous additional physical threats and continued Anti-Gay Slurs the United States Army first isolated Lawson from all the other soldiers, then soon discharged Kyle Lawson for his own safety. Lawson then located in Tucson, Arizona for a short period time before returning to his family’s home in Missouri.^{48 48} *The Associated Press*, “Gay soldier leaves Army after assault,” in *Arizona Daily Star*, January 6, 2006 [online]

2005 - April 2nd – The Prescott Pride Center in Prescott, Arizona is vandalized in a Gay Vandalism Hate Crime on April 2 that is investigated by the Prescott Police Department. Some teenagers spray-painted Anti-Gay epitaphs and pictures on the outside of the center’s building. Prescott Police caught the teenagers responsible for the Gay Hate Crime with mediation sessions soon following between the teenagers and the Prescott Pride Center. The heterosexual community rallied behind the Prescott Pride Center and condemned the Anti-Gay Attacks..^{49 49} Rybka, Ted. “Mile high hate: Prescott’s gay community center the target of vandals,” in *Echo*, May 19, 2005, pg. 18 – see pics

2005 - May 27th – Amancio Corrales, a 23-year-old Yuma, Arizona Gay Man who performs as a female impersonator under the name Dalila is found murdered in the Colorado River outside the city of Yuma. The highly suspected Gay Hate Crime Murder has not been solved.^{50 50}

2005 - September – A Gay Man in Tucson, Arizona is lured and then physically attacked then stabbed in his neck by two men after initially chatting with one of men that he met on-line and knew for a week.⁵¹

2006 - June – A Gay Man is lured out from the IBT’s Gay bar on 4th Avenue in Tucson, Arizona and sexually assaulted by three men in a car, then they rob him of his wallet and valuables. (letter to community by the survivor, *Observer*, June 14, 2006)

2011 - February 14 - Valentine’s Day – 23 year old Tucson, Arizona Gay Man George Ignacio Soto, a former EON Youth Group Member, is first punched down to the ground and then Stabbed To Death on Stone Avenue across the street from Amphi High School by three (3) young Crips Gang affiliated men. Unemployed Gabriel Israel Soliz a.k.a. Gabriel Bustamonte a.k.a. Gabriel O’Bregon a.k.a. “18” is arrested and held for the Gay Hate Crime Murder of George Soto.

One of the three men agrees to testify against the murderer Soliz but he does not survive to testify in court after he himself is gunned down/shot/knifed to death in a downtown Tucson Alley just a few weeks before the start of the trial.

Only Gabriel Soliz is ever charged in the Murder of George Soto and receives a

'Life Without The Possibility Of Parole' sentence after he openly pleads guilty to the Gay Hate Crime Murder under a Plea Agreement with the Pima County Prosecutor's thus avoiding him the trial and the possibility of a Sentence of Death.

Tucson Gay Museum

tucsongaymuseum.org

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