



# STAND UP TO HATE



## ANTI-LGBTQ VIOLENCE IN WISCONSIN

On Christmas Eve, 2011, Andrew Nesbitt asked two men outside of an Oshkosh bar for a cigarette. He offered to buy them a drink in exchange. The two men allege that Nesbitt began flirting with them—they responded by brutally attacking him. The two men left Nesbitt with a brain injury and a broken jaw. As they attacked him, they shouted anti-gay slurs. Nesbitt was found alone, barely conscious on the street.

Nesbitt told police he was attacked for being gay. One man told police he attacked Nesbitt because he was “very homophobic.” Both men were charged with a hate crime, convicted, and sentenced to two years in prison.



Six years later Nesbitt was murdered in Madison. Although his death did not appear to be a hate crime, it highlights the danger that LGBTQ people face.

Sometimes excuses like the ones Nesbitt’s attackers made are known as the “Gay Panic” defense. Heterosexual men explain that they are afraid people will think they rare gay. They lose control; they respond with violence. Such excuses are not limited to anti-LGBTQ crimes. People excuse their violence when they are afraid of someone’s skin color, their religious clothing, or because they are speaking a different language.

These cases are common in Wisconsin and outside of it. In 1997 the man who murdered Robin Elsinger, the owner of a tavern in Hustisford, said Elsinger had hit on him. The men who murdered Mathew Shepard in 1998 in Laramie, Wyoming, tried to make the same defense. Mathew Shepard’s death helped inspire new laws against hate crimes.



### More LGBTQ Stories

*Kayden - Kewaunee, WI*

Then I met my first trans man. I’d never met anybody like that before. I was talking to him and was feeling like, “Wow, this is exactly what I’m feeling right now.” After that encounter, it was like a door unlocked. I knew that I was trans. But I held that door closed. I was like, “Well, I may know that I’m trans, but if I come out, that’s just going to be a whole ‘nother whirlwind for my family. I’m going to lose all my friends all over again.”

For a long time I avoided going back to my small town just because I was scared. I was afraid of being ostracized and shunned like that first trans man I met. Actually, it’s been just the opposite, which really surprised me. A lot of people have reached out to my parents because they want to learn more and they have an interest in being educated about this. They wanted to know how to support both me and my parents. I always thought it totally wouldn’t be that way, so it’s been really mind-blowing.

I believe that in the Midwest and especially Wisconsin, there are a lot of really loving people. When I was growing up, sure, there was also closed-mindedness, but people are only closed-minded because they don’t have the resources to understand certain things.

**Excerpt from**

<https://www.lovewi.com/kayden/>

# ANTI-LGBTQ VIOLENCE IN WISCONSIN

The FBI reports 60 hate crimes against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Wisconsinites in the last decade. These hate crimes are only a small fraction of the violence that LGBTQ people face in our state.

For instance, in the last two years, at least five Black Transgender women have been murdered in Milwaukee. Brazil Johnson, Toi Davis, Regina Allen, Cashay Henderson, and Chyna Long, join the dozens of Trans people murdered every year. Few of these are recorded as hate crimes. That does not mean that anti-LGBT hate did not play a role in their deaths.

Conflict with parents and landlords make trans people more likely to be homeless. Bullying at school and the workplace makes trans people more likely to live in poverty. This puts them at greater risk. When people do not have a safe home, a steady job, or accepting family, they have fewer ways to protect themselves.

Jim Nesbitt, Andrew's brother, now fights for LGBTQ rights. He has argued that people need to respond to bullying, cyberbullying, and "keyboard warriors." "They start complaining on the internet, saying things like 'I just wish they wouldn't make it their entire personality' and that's how those small things start," he told the Green Bay Press-Gazette. "Because nobody starts off by running somebody over with a car. It starts off as bullying or it starts off as 'Oh, that's so gay' or you know, whatever it is."

SCAN THIS CODE  
TO LEARN MORE



## The Battle For Juneau Park

By Michail Takach

Juneau Park, among the oldest of Milwaukee's county parks, was dedicated in 1872 as a "breathing lung" to the congested industrial city. Between 1962 and 1963, a quarter of the city's disorderly conduct arrests happened in Juneau Park, and the number was growing every month.

"Up to 24 undercover detectives patrolled the tiny park nightly, and their tactics often involved entrapment, coercion and violence. The park became a battleground with real life casualties. One of those casualties was Elroy Schulz...Vice squad detectives claimed that Elroy resisted arrest. In the process of being "arrested," Elroy suffered shattered dentures, diabetic shock, abdominal bleeding and a brain hemorrhage – although the officer claimed to hit him only once. He died before sunrise, less than five hours after his discharge."

Schulz's death was a chilling reminder to expect no mercy. Rather than being scared into hiding by police brutality, criminal records or social shame, Milwaukee's gay community defiantly emerged from the darkness. Bars began opening all over the city, creating a network of safe spaces that fostered unity, activism and ultimately, liberation.

Excerpt from:

<https://urbanmilwaukee.com/2017/04/14/out-look-the-battle-for-juneau-park/>

This story is part of a program developed with the support of:



WISCONSIN  
HUMANITIES

