

## Proposition Hate

A lesbian woman (known as Jane Doe, to protect her anonymity) is gang-raped by four men in Richmond, Calif. On her way home from a Minneapolis grocery store, 32-year-old lesbian Kristen Boyne is beaten unconscious by two men. These are just two of the many hate crimes committed against LGBT people in the past year, and experts say the problem is getting worse.

According to a report compiled by the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP), the number of reported attacks against LGBT people jumped from 1,486 in 2006 to 1,833 in 2007, a 24 percent increase. Data isn't available for 2008, but the number of attacks is expected to be even higher.

"We do see correlations between anti-LGBT initiatives and increases in hate violence," says Avy Skolnik, NCAVP coordinator of Statewide and National Programs. "There tend to be numerical spikes during periods of homophobic or transphobic political campaigns. It is possible that [pro-Prop. 8] campaigning could be interpreted by some as permission to act violently towards members of our communities."

Indeed, the nature of the crimes indicates that they are reactionary.

The woman from Richmond was attacked when she stepped out of her rainbow-sticker-adorned car. The incident brings the issues surrounding the gay marriage debate off the front page and into stark reality.

"This person is a survivor, her partner spoke, she has a child. All those issues don't always necessarily come out," says Tina D'Elia, of Community United Against Violence in San Francisco. "A lot of the argument behind the Yes on 8 campaign portrayed gay marriage as anti-family and being disconnected from all of that, which is obviously not true."

D'Elia says that Jane Doe's courage and her honesty about her sexuality is the reason for the strong community support surrounding the incident. Kristen Boyne (pictured) of Minneapolis has garnered a similar following. In January, activists and friends in her neighborhood organized a Queer Women's March in her honor to raise awareness and demand that all women should be safe on the streets at night.

"The response from the community was overwhelming," says Andrea Sieve, one of Boyne's good friends. "Once Kristen's story made the news, we had people from all different walks of life reaching out to see how they could help."

Boyne was walking to a store a few blocks from home one night when two men began calling her a "dyke." When she confronted them, they began punching her and kicking her in the stomach.

"It was, no doubt about it, a gay-bashing incident," says Sieve. Boyne's neighborhood is typically

a very gay-friendly area and the community was shocked at incident, which happened practically on Boyne's doorstep.

"Since the march, we have had an amazing response from different organizations within the queer community, such as Outfront Minnesota, locals, artists and community members and several local newspapers," says Sieve. "All have shown amazing support and have stood behind Kristen and our cause in an effort to get the word out about the attack, as well as raise money for Kristen's

medical and living expenses, as she has been out of work for almost three months now."

Sieve isn't sure whether the controversy over Prop. 8 and the rise in hate crimes are directly related, but she does believe the growing presence, voice and support of the gay community may have something to do with more recent violent attacks.

"With positivity, there will always be negativity from those who do not agree," says Sieve. She plans to keep the positivity flowing by making the Queer Women's March ([www.myspace.com/queerwomenmarch](http://www.myspace.com/queerwomenmarch)) an annual event. "We have had such an overwhelming response from the community and are thankful for all of the help we have had in planning the Queer Women's March. We are also extremely thankful for the help that Kristen has received from community members and people all around her who care about the cause." **[Kimberly Bale]**



### HITCHHIKING WITH A GREENER THUMB

Though Pickuppal.com does not advertise itself as a dating service, if you lock two people in a car for six hours on the way to a music festival, who knows what could happen. The eco-conscious carpool matchmaking site combines networking and GPS technology with good old-fashioned neighborliness to create a world where everybody gets where they're going. Pickuppal has been gaining momentum by focusing on music events and partnering with the likes of Dave Matthews and Nike. It's free to all who use it so check it out: You never know where you might end up. ([www.pickuppal.com](http://www.pickuppal.com))

**[Heather Robinson]**

