



Press Release. For immediate release on January 26th 2021

RE: Hate Crime in Oceanside

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Hate Crime in Oceanside

While enjoying a meal at a local Oceanside restaurant on November 24, 2020, a 41-year-old, openly gay man was stabbed three times in a violent attack that nearly killed him. The attacker was unknown to the victim and the attack itself was entirely unprovoked. The victim, “Geremias Martin” was simply enjoying a meal with his friends- another gay man and a transgender woman- and none of them had any exchange of any kind with the attacker preceding the attack, and the attacker did not steal or rob the victim. The only apparent motive was hatred of LGBTQ+ people.

Upon reviewing closed circuit camera footage of the attack, Oceanside Police were able to identify the attacker, and he was someone previously known to them. Based on the evidence available, witness accounts, and the severity of the attack, charges of Attempted Murder were filed, but the suspect subsequently fled the country and has not yet been apprehended.

In situations where a violent crime has been perpetrated against a person, a fund, managed by the San Diego County District Attorney’s office, is available to support that victim of crime while they recover. This fund is designed to assist victims with things like medical costs, relocation expenses, mental health services, and loss of income, among other things. Unfortunately, the reality is that accessing the funds and services, especially when one is a recent victim or is still recovering from injuries received in a criminal attack, is slow, tedious, and full of red tape.

Nearly 2 months have passed since this violent hate crime occurred and “GM” is still left unable to work, in need of physical and emotional support, and at risk of becoming homeless at no fault of his own.

The North County LGBTQ Resource Center denounces this hate crime and attack and stands in solidarity with “GM” to make sure justice is done and the attacker is found and held accountable for their crimes. The Center has stepped in to support “GM” with essential needs like rent, food, and emotional support services, but our resources are limited. The nature of “GM’s” injuries mean he won’t be able to return to work for months. He has no family to lean on during his recovery and **the risk of homelessness is significant.**

The North County LGBTQ Resource Center is now speaking publicly about this crime. While initially respecting OPD’s request for silence regarding this incident (to avoid any potential interference with their investigation), after two months of official silence we now feel

the community of Oceanside and its citizens need to be made aware that hate crimes against the LGBTQ+ community continue to occur, and we need to condemn them together and insist that they are prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

The North County LGBTQ Resource Center calls upon the San Diego County District Attorney's Office to promptly assist "GM" through the Victims Assistance Program with funds to assist with medical care, housing, transportation and other vital needs to make sure that "GM" can be properly cared for and heal without losing of his home.

The North County LGBTQ Resource Center also calls upon the San Diego County District Attorney to file this attack as a **Hate Crime**. The evidence of the case is clear- this crime was a hateful attack against a member of our community. While the law requires "intent by a perpetrator to show or vocalize the reason for an attack," even with the absence of these acts, the reality of the attack is clear. Unfortunately, too often, law enforcement and the justice department use the lack of clear hate speech during the commission of a crime as a reason NOT to file hate crime charges, resulting in lower sentences and an overall loss of trust in the criminal justice system for victims and the community at large. Therefore, we also encourage legislators to eliminate this loophole in the law with clear, simple language that removes some of the discretion that allows obvious hate crimes to be diminished by those charged with protecting all of us.

Lastly, the North County LGBT Resource Center is sharing and supporting the Go Fund me that Geremias M. has created to quickly provide relief. <https://gofund.me/b763abf6>